

1059.T.2

ΓΝΩΣΤΟΝ ΤΟΤ' ΘΕΟΤ',

ἔ

ΓΝΩΣΤΟΝ ΤΟΤ' ΧΡΙΣΤΟΤ',

OR,

K THAT WHICH MAY BE
KNOWN OF GOD

BY THE

BOOK of NATURE;
And the excellent Knowledge of
JESUS CHRIST by the
BOOK of SCRIPTURE.

Delivered at St Mary's in Oxford,

*By EDW. à WOOD, M.A. late Proctor of the
University, and Fellow of Merton Coll. Oxon.*

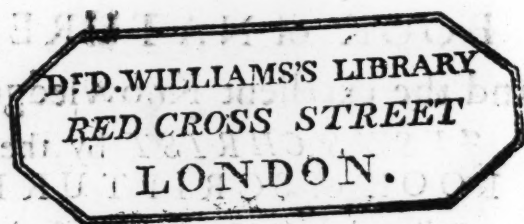
To which is added the Authors last Sermon

Preach'd 20. Mar. 16⁴/₅

The second Edition.

OXFORD,

Printed by H. H. Printer to the University,
for Ed. Forrest. 1674.



ORNATISSIMO VIRO
D. IONATHANI GODDARD
MEDICINÆ DOCTORI,
INCLYTI COLLEGII MER-
TONENSIS IN ANTIQUIS.
SIMA UNIVERSITATE

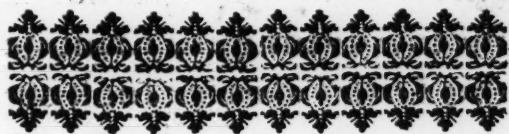
OXON: Custodi dignissimo,

ANTONIUS; à WOOD ejusdem
Collegii Alumnus,

*Has primitias modo fratris defuncti
suo patricinio humiliter*

Dat, Dicat, Dedicat,

*The Sermon that begins p. 113.
is to follow that which be-
gins in p. 153.*



THE PUBLISHER
to the Courteous Reader.

THe Authour of these
Sermons being late-
ly *fałne asleep*, and
having had no Admission,
whiile he was Living, to be
recommended to *Publike*
View, the *Perswasion* and *Im-*
portunity (since his death)
of some of my *Friends*, and
such as may challenge no
small *Interest* in mee, hath
A 2 (though

(though unwilling) induced
me to Adventure to Exhibite
this *Little Volume* to look out
and do *Service* in the *World*:
He himselfe whilst he lived
Wrote it, and doubtlesse he
had *finished* it, if God had lent
him *longer Life*: but it fared
so with him, as once with
Hezekiab, *Esay* 37. 3. *The*
children were come to the birth,
and there was not strength to
bring forth. I have as a *Bro-*
ther, though not as a skilfull
Midwife, done what I could
to *bring it forth*, by collecting
it out of his *Paper-books*, and
some other loose *Writings*
from

from his *private Study*, which
was the onely *Remora* to it's
more *Suddaine*, and much
desired *Birth*.

Some *Errata's* since have
passed the *Presse* (which per-
haps will not so well relish
with thy *Palate*) but I whol-
ly rely upon thy *Courteous*
Ingenuity to passe them over
with *Silence*.

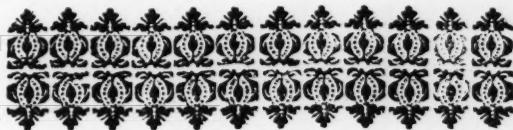
Thou mayest here expect
that I should speake some-
thing in *Commendation* of this
Worke, which is not, happily,
so fitting, it being both hard
for one *Brother* to *praise* ano-
ther without *Boasting*: more-
over,

over, for me to seeke thy *Ap-
probation* of it by any *Faire*
and *Plausible Inductions*, were
altogether to *Distrust*, if not
Impare the worth of it. I know
the worke it selfe will suffici-
ently *Praise* him, especially,
if thou wilt vouchsafe to pe-
ruse it *Charitably* (I meane,
without any *Detracting Ca-
lumnies* or *Cynicall Censures*)
which if thou dost, thou
shalt find his *Spirit* in them,
and in a manner heare him,
(although *Dead*) yet *Speaking*
unto thee : and shalt hereby
much perswade the *Publish-
er* to leave off (at least in
some

some measure) *grieving* for,
and *lamenting* over his once
Living , and alway *Loving*
Brother , and shalt rather di-
vert the *stream* of his *Affecti-*
ons into a strong current of
Haleluiah's , for the *Hopes*
that he hath (especially from
those that willingly enter-
taine a *Dead mans works* and
retaine his words in their
Living Hearts) of doing
good by this his *Publication* ,
which is the desire of

Thy Servant

A.W.



R O M. I. 19, 20.

*Because that which may be knowne of
God is manifest in them, for God
hath shewed it unto them.*

*For the invisible things of him from the
the creation of the world are clearely
seen, being understood by the things
that are made, even his eternall
power and Godhead, so that they are
without excuse.*



Here are three bookes
wherein the *Deity* may
be plainly read and dis-
covered, the booke of
nature, the book of the
creatures, and the book
of the Scriptures : this latter was pecu-
liar to the Jewes, the two former com-
mon both to Jew and Gentile, for unto
the Jewes were committed the oracles of
B God,

God, because they were his peculiar
 people, unto the Jew and Gentile the
 light of nature, and use of the Scrip-
 tures, because they both were men, and
 inhabitants of the world. Now out of
 these three bookes our Apostle labour-
 eth to convince of unrighteousnesse
 the two great enemies of our justifi-
 cation by faith in Christ, the self-con-
 ceited Jew, and the Idolatrous Gentile:
 for however the one might pretend
 unto salvation by vertue of their inhe-
 rent righteousness, and the other hope
 to escape damnation by their ignorance
 of the Law, which threatneth death
 to the breakers thereof, yet our A-
 postle in this his Epistle doth plainly
 demonstrate, that neither the righteous-
 nesse of the one was so commensurate
 and answerable to the law of God, as
 to attaine heaven and avoid the curse,
 and that the ignorance of the other
 was not so great, as that thereby they
 might become inexcusable, and with-
 out offence towards God; both Jew
 and Gentile are sinfull, *for there is none*
that doth good, no not one, and therefore
 both

both Jew and Gentile are lyable unto damnation; the Jewes, because it is impossible for them to keepe the Law, from the observance of which they expected life; the Gentile, because they were not obedient unto those common notions, and implanted truths they had of God and morall honesty. For however they pretended not to know God, and therefore not to hold the truth in unrighteousnesse, as 'tis evidently shewne they doe in the foregoing verse; yet our Apostle doth by force of Argument take away their false pretences, and plainly convinceth them of both in the words of my Text, which, as I suppose, are brought in to prevent a secret objectiō that the Gentile might frame against the doctrine of the precedent verse: for the Apostle being about to prove our justification onely by faith, doth in the 18. verse dispute negatively, & shew that workers, in which both Jew and Gentile trusted, could never justifie, they being so farre from making us appeare righteous before God, that the wrath of God is

revealed against them, for the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodlinesse and unrighteousnesse of men. The best workes of naturall men cannot free them from being guilty of ungodlinesse and unrighteousnesse, from the breach of the first and second Tables, and therefore is the wrath of God revealed from heaven, even against the best workes of men. But what kind of men are these that stand thus charged with ungodlinesse and unrighteousnesse? Why? *Such*, saith Saint Paul, *who hold the truth in unrighteousnesse*; but you Gentiles doe thus hold the truth in unrighteousnesse, 'tis you that suppress, smother, and imprison those truthes that are in you concerning God and your neighbour, and therefore 'tis you primarily, who stand guilty of unrighteousnesse and ungodlinesse: and here you may suppose the froward Gentile muttering within himselfe, and thus cavilling at the Apostles *minor*, what Saint Paul, will you say, we hold the truth in unrighteousnesse? whereas we are altogether

gether ignorant of God: the Jewes indeed are without excuse, because in the Scriptures God is plainly revealed unto them; but as for us we sit in darknesse, and the shadow of death, without the least glimmering or knowledge of God, and therefore pray forbear so hard a censure: no, saith the Apostle, say what you will, yet there is a light within you, and there are creatures without you, that will easily confute your fond opinion; it is not for Gentiles to plead ignorance, because that which may be knowne of God is manifest in them, *for the invisible things of him, &c.* So then you may have here the Gentiles plea refuted; they secretly seem to plead not guilty to the Apostles charge of their with-holding the truth in unrighteousnesse: their plea seemes to be taken from their ignorance of God, and could they have maintained this, they might easily have eluded that; wherefore Saint *Paul* to take away all shifts and evasions from them, and the better to confirme his charge, brings in two bills of reply against them,

them, the first is grounded upon that naturall light which God hath manifested unto them concerning himselfe; the second upon the creatures, which with a dumbe kind of eloquence did every where proclaime the power of their Maker, and which were as a conduct and guidance unto them into the knowledge of the Godhead, which they vainly pretended to be ignorant of. To the first of these grounds I shall speake at present, and onely more distinctly handle what I have heretofore in a private Congregation represented in grosse.

Take the words as they lye in themselves, and you shall find in them *aliquid allegatum*, & *aliquid probatum*, an allegation, and a prooffe or reason of this allegation. The Gentile seems to plead ignorance; the Apostle alleageth the contrary, because, saith he, that which may be knowne of God is manifest in them: and lest he should seem to stick here, he brings in further evidence and prooffe, for what he had said in these words, *for God hath shewne it unto them*.

In

In both you may be pleased to take notice of, First, the matter alleaged, their knowledge of God, τὸ γνωστὸν τοῦ Θεοῦ, that which may be knowne of God, or that which is knowable of God, namely, by natures discovery, not by extraordinary revelations, and Evangelicall dispensations, as *Vorstius* and others without reason conceive. For this τὸ γνωστὸν τοῦ Θεοῦ, in the preceding verse, which according unto *Beza*, and the best expositors is nothing but a naturall knowledge of God, and of good and evill; the knowledge of God necessarily Implying, or at least upon inevitable consequence bringing in the knowledge of good and evill.

2. Secondly, you may observe the qualification or manner of this their knowledge, φανερόν ἐστι, it is manifest as the light which shineth in them, and is so cleare, that do what they can, they can never shut their eyes against it, or wholly blot it out.

3. Thirdly, here are the subjects in whom this knowledge resides, ἐν ἑαυτοῖς in them (viz.) in the Gentiles, which some translate, amongst them, and so

referre this knowledge to their learned ones, and *Philosophers*, who have left every where in their writings evident testimonies thereof; but our owne translation, as I conceive, is most proper & neerer the originall, and so in them will be as much as in their minds and consciences, as you will further heare anon.

Fourthly, here is the *Author* of this knowledge in them, ὁ Θεός, God, ushered in with the rational particle, ὅς as ὁ ᾧ Θεὸς ἐφανερώσθαι αὐτοῖς, for God hath shewne it unto them, God, that is, partly by the light of nature in their consciences, and partly by the conduct of the creatures, hath so plainly declared and shewed himselfe unto the Gentiles, that they cannot pretend their ignorance of him, or of their duty towards their neighbour.

From the words thus opened you may gather this Observation, *That there is, & ever hath been in all men, even in the Gentiles, a Naturall light, whereby they have been directed unto God, and naturall goodnesse.*

In the prosecution of which I shall shew you, First, what is meant more fully by this Naturall light.

Secondly, I shall endeavour to demonstrate that it is and ever hath bin in all men, even in the Gentiles.

Thirdly, I shall enquire; whether or no, this naturall light were sufficient unto the salvation of the Gentiles.

And Lastly, I shall deduce some practicall inferences, from what shall be said for our owne use. For the understanding of the first point, namely what is meant, by this Naturall light, or light of nature, we must note that man may be considered, either in his primitive creation, or in his corrupted sinfull estate; if we consider, man first in his created integrity: so without doubt this light was a clear, distinct, penetrative and unerring light: for God framing all things according to that exact plat-forme and Idea, which was eternally in himselfe, did accordingly bestow upon his creatures all things requisite unto their severall species and
conditi-

conditions, and therefore man being the Master-peece, (as I may so speake) of all his works, was by him primitively Invested with more noble endowments then any other creature whatsoever: for whereas other things were either by instinct or immediate direction of God ordered unto their severall ends and his glory, man alone amongst the rest did cleerely and rationally apprehend the will and greatnesse of his maker; other creatures did blindly serve him in their severall Ranckes and orders, but man being farther enlightned with an understanding and reasonable soule, did freely, and with choice cleave unto him as his cheifest good, so that Adam by verue of that excellent light which God had infused unto him, did know God, and his will savingly, and with such a perfection as was most proper for his condition. For though it may bee true what the School-men say, that this concreated light and knowledge in our first parents might have been further increased by rationall discourse, and
supers

supervenient grace, yet doubtlesse in it selfe, without any further addition it was sufficient to lead them into a saving knowledge of the will and true worship of God; these divine rayes soe enlightning the whole man, that the great Mysteries of God and salvation were as distinctly impres- sed upon his soule, as the Image of the Sunne ever was upon the most pure and CrySTALLINE glasse.

But now, Secondly, as the most beautifull picture, being sullyed and dawbed over, doth loose much of its forme and grace, soe likewise that excellent image of God in man, be- ing once besmeared over with sinne, did loose very much of its pristine glory and goodnesse, and therefore no wonder if the same light and know- ledge of God in man, which before was so cleere and distinct in us, is now through sin become dull, confused, and faint; for it is the nature of sin alwaies to overcast and unite the soule with ignorance, as you may every where read in the Scriptures of the
blind;

blindnesse, darknesse, and ignorance of men in the state of Nature. Sinne then interposing betweene God and us, this glorious light suffered a very fearefull Eclips, and as the faint glimmerings of a Lamp or Candle in the socket, was mingled with very much darknesse and confusion: for though through sin it was not quite extinguished in us, as plainly appears by the text, yet so far was it dulled that we cannot by the remainders thereof either read the will of God, or from it derive any comfort unto our selves. For as by a dull and obscure taper we may perhaps view a body in grosse, whereas we cannot through the weakness of the light scan each particular part of it; why so here, by this light of nature we may apprehend indeed God & his worship in generall, but we can never thereby dive more particularly into his will, or those his attributes of grace, pardoning mercy, love unto us in Christ, and the like, which none can fully understād without faith in Christ *in whom alone are hid all the treasures*

*treasures of wisdom and knowledge, Col.
2. vers. 3.*

Wel then ; to draw to an head, by comparing these our two estates together, you may easily conceive what is meant by this naturall light, or light of nature ; for it is nothing else but those common ordinary notions and conceits remaining in the minds and consciences of men concerning God and naturall goodnesse : in the first verse it is called the truth, because of those plaine convictions it hath upon the consciences of naturall men, and therefore they that resist this light, and walk not according unto its dictates are said to hold the truth in unrighteousnesse, that is, unjustly to stifle and keep under those apprehensions of God and goodnesse, from appearing in their Lives or Actions. And in the second of this Epistle, and the thirteenth, it is called *the Law written in their hearts*, from the command & awfull power it hath over the hearts of men, in which it is engraven as with the point of a diamond; and therefore *Iamblicus* an eminent

minent Author calls it an inbred and immoveable notion. Wee stile this light of nature, common, ordinary notions and conceipts; common they are, because they are congeniall, and imbred in all men; and ordinary, because, though all men naturally have some slight and catching conceipts at God, yet they neither know aright who or what kind of God this is, and therefore you may read *Act. 17. vers. 23.* of an Altar amongst the *Athenians* inscribed, *Unto the unknowne God*: and Christ said the *Samaritans* worshipped they knew not what, *Joh. 4. 22.* Secondly, we say that these notions remaine in the minds and consciences of men; for first, in the minds reside those *μεγα ἀξιώματα*, those speculative, prime and fundamentall truths, namely, that there is a God, that all effects have dependence upon some cause, and the like. And secondly, because in the consciences of men reside those *κοινὰ ἐννόμα*, those practicall and morall principles, by which we conclude within our selves, that since there is a God, he is
to

to be worshipped, that we ought to do unto others as we would have them doe unto us, that we ought to deale justly with all men, and the like. From whence it is that the Apostle saith of the *Gentiles*, *that they do by nature the things contained in the Law*, even the *Gentiles have a naturall Law imprinted in their hearts*, by which they are carried unto those Common generall duties which concerne God and their neighbour; which will further be cleered unto you if you consider with me the second point, namely, that this light of nature is in all men; or rather thus, that there are some Common notions of God and goodnesse imprinted in the hearts of all men, even of the *Gentiles*. There is no man so over dawbed with sin and filthynesse, so benighted and overclouded with wretched ignorance, but hath oftentimes the flashes and immediate representations of the Deity darting in upon him, and there is noe man of soe debauched and loose a life, so benumbed and frozen affections, but hath ever
and

and anon the secret whips and girds of a conscience to reſtraine him, together alſo with naturall Impreſſions of goodneſſe to thaw and melt him into more ingenuity ; Now then that this light of nature,

First, as it relates unto God, is in all, may appeare both by ſcripture and by reaſon; as for ſcripture were there no other, my text would be ſufficient proof that that which may be known of God is manifeſt in them, that is in the Gentiles, and ſo conſequently in all. *That which may be knowne of God,* whereby is implied, that there are ſome things concerning God above the pitch and kenne of this naturall light, the myſteries indeed of the Trinity, of the Incarnation of Chriſt and the like are Riddles unto nature, neither can they ever be reacht unto by humane diſquiſition; Yet it ſtill remaineth certaine that that which may be knowne of God, namely his being, his omnipotence and the like is manifeſt in them. In the 17. of the *Acts verſ.* 26, 27, 28. you may have another prooſe

prooffe for the Apostle there in his Ser-
 mon unto the *Athenian* Heathens,
 shewing that God was not so far from
 them, but that he might even *Palpando*
inveniri, as *Beza* translates it, be groped
 after, and easily found out. By that little
 naturall light that was in them they
 might tracke the foot-steps of *Divinitie*
ty, and haply find out in whom they
 lived, moved, and had their being: And
 so in the *Acts*, chap. 14. vers. 17. tis said
 that God left not himselfe without wit-
 nesse. There is within us an inbred light,
 as a domesticke Chaplaine continually
 to teach us, and without us rain from
 heaven, and fruitfull seasons, as so ma-
 ny visible witnesses to take away igno-
 rance, and all excuse from us; where-
 fore that of the *Psalmist*, *The foole hath*
said in his heart, *Psal. 14. 1.* must not be
 understood as if a wicked man (for he
 is the foole here) could quite obliterate
 and put out the light of nature, and
 Knowledge of God in him (for *A-*
theisme can never find a perfect and
 continuall assent in the heart of man)
 but onely that he so workes and lives
 C without

without the *feare* of God, as if he were fully perswaded that there were no God at all. The reasons then to prove that the Knowledge of God is in all men *Naturally*, may be many, I shall name only two or three, and let passe the *common consent* of all *Nations*. *Nul-la gens tam barbara est*, saith *Tully*, there is no nation so barbarous and destitute of *Common reason*, as not to acknowledge a God; to let passe also the *Naturall discourses*, and ultimate resolutions of the minds of men into some *Supream cause*, and *first Mover* of all things.

1. First, the testimonies of the *Heathens* themselves do sufficiently evidence the truth; 'tis *Pauls* way of arguing with the *Athenians*, as certaine also of your owne *Poets* have said, We are also his *Offspring*, *Acts* 17.28. He infers their knowledge of God, and the truth of his worship from their owne mouthes, and so may we also. *Plato* calls a man *Ζῷον θεοειδές* a creature naturally religious, and a worshiper of God: yea himselfe hath written so *Divinely*

vinely and Reverently of God, that many of the Antients have gone about to prove him a Christian; though *Bernard* truly and wittily saith, *whilst many would faine make Plato a Christian they prove themselves heathens*. It would be as endlesse as it is needlesse to produce here the severall testimonies which *Heathen Authors* do every where give to this truth, some amongst them sealing it with their blood, others every where professing it in their writings: and however there have been some few amongst them, who have denyed this truth, yet I am perswaded their *tongues* went not along with their *hearts*. Twas more their desire that there should be no God, then their opinion that there was none. As guilty prisoners wish the death of their *Judge*, onely because they conceive him to be the instrument of their condemnation: in like manner these and such like men being conscious to themselves, of their owne desperate wickednesse desire the not being of him whose *Justice* they well know must

must needs take notice of and severely punish their offences.

For, secondly, the Testimonies of their *Consciences* will easily declare that they have such a *light* and *knowledge* of God within them. There is no man so great, so absolute and independent from the command and beck of others, but is sometimes awed and controled by a *Power* within his owne brest, and those secret checks and lashes of *Conscience* upon the commission of some notorious offence, must needs make the stoutest sinner confesse a power above him, which he feares, and a God unto whom he is accountable for all his Offences. Hence the *Apostle* shewing the *workes* of the *Law* to be written in the *Hearts* of the *Gentiles*, amplifies it further, and addes this as a kind of a reason, *their consciences also bearing them witness, and their thoughts in the meane while accusing or else excusing one another, Rom. 2. vers. 15.*

Thirdly, the very multiplicity of the *Heathenish Gods* may (as I suppose) plainly

plainly shew that they had this indelible principle written in their hearts; for though some of them had as many Gods as they had *Onyons* and *Leekes* in their gardens; and though the Worship they ascribed unto these their Deities was as various as the severall nations and opinions of men were; yet these their various Worships and Opinions of a God did plainly denote, that a God it was whom they sought and hunted after; for though they erred in *particulars*, yet they all agreed in this *Generall*, that a God there was. As the water of the same fountaine may bee diversely spread into severall streames and eddies, yet all these severall streames & eddies fall into one sea; so likewise though this principle of nature may flow and be divided into various opinions concerning God, yet these various opinions doe all meete and concenter in this *Generall* notion and conceite of a God. And therefore the *Apostle* saith that the *Athenians* did generally worship the true God
under

under the false maske and Inscription they gave unto him of the *Unknowne God*, as you may see *Acts 17. vers. 23.*

But, secondly, this *Light of Nature* as it relates unto *Naturall goodnesse* is in all men; *Naturall goodnesse* I say, for as for that *legall goodnesse* which supposeth, the righteousness of workes, tis impossible for any sonne of Adam to have, for by the deeds of the *Law* there shall be no flesh justified in his sight, *Rom. 3. 20.* And as for that *Evangelicall goodnesse* which supposeth the righteousness of faith, no unbeliever can partake of it, for faith comes by hearing and hearing by the word of God. *Rom. 10. 17.*

It remaines then that the *Gentiles* onely had and still have the remainders of *Naturall goodnesse* alone left in them; now that they had this will better appeare by distinguishing of *Naturall goodnesse*, which is either civill or morrall; civill goodnesse I shall define to be that inbred propension in all men to maintaine societies and naturall life. This certainly was, and at this day

day is in the *Heathens* themselves: from whence else have proceeded those excellent positive Lawes and Constitutions of *Solon*, *Draco* and others, by which as by so many sinewes and ligaments, Common-wealths hath bin joyned and compacted together? From whence those noble inventions and sciences of *Physick*, *Mathematick*, *Astronomy* and the like, without which mans life would be neither comfortable nor delightfull? From whence those inferiour *Mechanicall* arts, by which rude and undigested things are curiously modified and prepared for the use of man? From whence are these, I say, and many of the like nature, but from that inbred Naturall Life of Goodnesse in man, guiding and directing him unto the common Publique good of humane society? Hence we read of *Jaball and Juball and Tuball-Cain Gen. 4.* cunning artificers and curious inventors, which yet notwithstanding were all meer *naturall men* of the cursed race, and without the Covenant & Church of God.

The second sort of *naturall goodnesse* may be called morall, & it consists (as I conceive) in a mans *obedience unto the dictates of reason, in embracing vertue & voiding vice*. That the *Gentiles* were thus morally good , those admirable examples of their *Justice, Fortitude, Temperance*, and other the like vertues , do sufficiently declare. Some of them being so exactly rigorous in administering of *Justice*, that they have not spared their owne sons offending : some againe devoting themselves , and exposing their owne throats to the sword for the good of their country : Others so *Abstemious* and *Temperate* , that in the greatest feasts of their *Princes* , they have not so much as touched any wine : Others so *Chast*, that they have not admitted into their sight any object that might provoke them unto lust. It were easie here to make a particular induction through all the Commandements of the second Table, and prove unto you as aswell by instances of Scripture , as from prophane authors , how that the *Gentiles* by their exact outward conformity

formity unto reason, evidently shewed the worke of the Law to be written in their hearts. But examples of this kind are infinite; and not onely examples, but precepts also; for what excellent rules do they every where prescribe for the steering and directing a man in the paths of Vertue? What grave and sage precepts, eschewing of evill, embracing of good? We must indeed confesse, that these grave precepts, these excellent rules, however in generall knowne and prescribed, were yet notwithstanding, when they came particularly to be applyed, oftentimes little used or made good by the practise of their *owne Authors*: such was that overruling power of *Passion* in the strictest Professors, that some of them have lived in the common practice of those vices which their judgements otherwise have disallowed; as we may read concerning *Aristotle*, then whom no one hath more commended *chastity*; and yet so little did he observe his own rules, that he would faine make a *Goddesse* of his impure strumpet, and so
Canonize

Canonize his owne lusts. Who writ
 more divinely concerning the con-
 tempt of the world then *Seneca*? and
 yet who a greater worldling? who
 more covetous then himselfe? as both
Tacitus and *Suetonius* note of him.
 Who seemed better furnished with
 Morall principles then *Zeno* and *Socra-
 tes*? and yet even they so little obeyed
 them, that they relapsed into unnatu-
 rall lusts, as *Plutarch* and *Laërtius* ob-
 serve of them, and as Saint *Paul* of
 other *Gentiles* in the latter end of this
Chapter. Wherefore it will not be as-
 misse, now in the third place, to en-
 quire, whether or no this *Light of Na-
 ture* be sufficient unto *salvation*: or,
 whether one may be saved by this
light of nature without faith in *Christ*?
 This saith our *Mountacnte*, in the first
 of his *Ecclesiasticall Apparatus*, is the
 opinion of many of the Fathers, *Cle-
 mens Alexandrinus*, *Iustin Martyr*,
Cyril of Alexandria, and others whom
 he there reckoneth up: how ever this
 same Author shoves the contrary opi-
 nion of most of the rest; and sure I am
 that

that *Austin* in many of his bookes *de Civitate Dei*, is against them, and so are most of the *Schoolmen*, the Modern especially, together with most of the *Popish* Doctors and *Protestant* reformers. But to omit the citation of their words, which you may elsewhere find, that I may according to the judgment and sense of the best divines briefly and clearly state the point, I shall promise these foure things.

I. That the ignorance of Christ cannot in it selfe excuse a man, and free him from damnation. There is a twofold ignorance you know, either *juris*, when a man is ignorant of what he is bound to know; or *facti*, when he is onely ignorant of some particular circumstance of what is done: this latter may excuse, as appeares in the case of *Abimelech*: *Gen. 20. 6.* the former doth not; and therefore God having revealed his will in the Scriptures concerning himselfe and Christ, every man upon forfeiture of his salvation, was and is bound to know it. As if a Prince should publish a Proclamation
out

out of a man's hearing, and in his absence, 'tis not his absence, or the not hearing thereof that can exempt him from punishment, if he disobeyes it.

2. Secondly, that there are, & ever have beene most of the *Gentiles* utterly destitute of any knowledge of Christ; and that whether it be an explicit, distinct, particular knowledge of *him*, and his *offices*, or an implicit onely and generall, concerning the *truth* and *subsistence* of such a Saviour: and therefore the incarnation of Christ is called an *hidden mystery* to former ages. *Col. 1. vers. 26.* and Saint Paul calls those times before Christ, *the times of ignorance, Act. 17. 30.*

3. Thirdly, that the knowledge of Christ, and faith in him, is every way *necessary* unto salvation; *necessary* as the onely meanes for the obtaining of it, for *there is no other name given under heaven, whereby we must be saved, Act. 4. 2.* and *necessary* by vertue of the injunction and positive command of God, for *this is his Commandement, that we should believe on the name of his*

his Sonne Jesus Christ, 1 Joh. 3. 23.

4. Fourthly, that God may instill oftentimes this faith into the hearts of many by meanes altogether unknowne unto us, and therefore that we ought not altogether to despaire of the salvation of such *Gentiles*, who have endeavoured in their life time to follow the lights and dictates of right reason. I speake not this, as if God were bound to bestow faith or salvation upon such men, but onely to magnifie the *unsearchable riches* of his *Mercy*. And to gaine a more charitable construction upon our following conclusion, these things then being premised, we assert the negative part of the question, and ground this conclusion, namely, *that no Gentile living and dying without faith in Christ can be saved by walking according to the light of nature.*

The truth of this may, first, appeare by considering the imperfection and worthlesnesse of their best naturall workes and vertues. We do not deny all manner of reward or profit unto
such

such *Gentiles* who lived more virtuously then others ; for besides the present tranquility of Conscience they enjoyed in this world , like enough their torments may be more tolerable in the next : but this wee may safely say, that the strictest of them either in life or profession could never fulfill the law , and so consequently never attaine unto salvation . For there never hath been any more then two wayes unto heaven, either by the *Law*, or by the *Gospel* ; but as for the *Law*, it was impossible for them to fulfill it, and as for the *Gospel*, t'is supposed in the question that they never believed it. I know very well, that there have been many who have gon about to *Canonize* the *Gentiles* for their excellent vertues; amongst whom is *Zuinglius* of latter dayes, and some of the *Fathers* of old : but certainly had they weighed even their best Actions in the balance of the Sanctuary, they had found them lighter then vanity it selfe. There are two things (as I conceive) mainly considerable

fiderable in every action, the principle
 from whence it proceedes, and the
 end unto which it is directed; now both
 these in the *Gentiles* were carnall, and
 not the least way acceptable to God:
 for as for the Principle and fountaine
 of their actions t'was flesh, *but flesh and
 blond can never inherit the Kingdome of
 heaven, 1 Cor, 15. 50. And that which
 is borne of the flesh is flesh, John 3. 6.*
 And as for the end of their Actions,
 t'was usually ambition and hope of
 praise, or covetousnesse and hope of
 reward. And this was the righteous-
 nesse of the Pharisees, and yet our Sa-
 viour saith *except our righteousness
 exceed the righteousness of the Scribes
 and Pharisees, we shall in no wise enter
 into the Kingdome of Heaven, Mat: 5.*
 20. Tis the end that makes the Acti-
 on Good or Bad. Almesgiving *Mate-*
rially and in it selfe considered is a
 good act, but then being performed
 by a Pharisee, for a bad end, it became
 evill: and so likewise the Vertuous
 Actions of the *Gentiles* may according
 to their outward matter be Morally
 good,

good, when as if we consider either the Principle from whence they proceeded, or the End unto which they were directed, they were but at the best *Splendida peccata*, handsome and well drest sinnes, and therefore neither *ex congruo*, as some of the *Armians* and *Papists* hold, leading unto further Grace, nor at all Acceptable in the eyes of God.

Secondly, this may further appeare by considering the necessity of Faith unto salvation. For if it be true, *that without faith it is impossible to please God, Heb. 11. 6.* and if it be true also, *that this onely is life eternall to know God and Jesus Christ whom he hath sent, Joh. 17. 3.* Then doubtlesse are those in a very sad condition who never so much as heard of this *Author of Salvation*, this *Christ*, in whom only God is well pleased. And however some men urge, that there is no such necessity for the *Gentiles* believing, because it was impossible for them thus to believe, having had heretofore no incomes or way to come to the knowledge

knowledge of him; we answered .

First, that absolutely there is no such *impossibility*; for then how came *Job* and others *Gentiles* into the pale of the Church: and according to some, the Law of Nature was sufficient to discover unto them a Christ; though this savours too much of *Felagianisme*.

Againe, secondly, what though it was impossible for them barely by the light of nature to believe? yet shall we tax God of tying his creatures to *impossibilities*? certainly we cannot; for it was not Gods fault but mans, who by his sinfull fall contracted unto himselfe and his posterity such an *impossibility*. But I must hasten .

Thirdly, this may further be made good unto you, by considering the vast disproportion and enmity that is betweene a Naturall understanding and Spirituall Mysteries. *The naturall man, saith the Apostle, receiveth not the not the things of the spirit of God, for they are spiritually discerned, 1 Corin.*

2. 14. ἔδεδίχεται, 'tis, say some expositors from the narrowness and incapacity of the intellective faculty to receive those $\pi\alpha\ \tau\tilde{\epsilon}\ \omega\tilde{\nu}\epsilon\upsilon\alpha\tau\ \Theta\ \tau\tilde{\epsilon}\ \Theta\epsilon\tilde{\upsilon}$, In the text indeed they are said to know the things of God but not the things of the spirit of God; and good reason to for it, for as water can ascend no higher then just the spring or fountaine from whence it is derived, even so the knowledge which flows from the light of Nature can mount no further, then into those things which are proportioned and levell with the same light. Should you tell a *Pagan* of three distinct persons united in the same nature, of an *Infinite* God wrapt up and cloysterd in *Finite* humane flesh, of being twice borne before he can become a child of God; would he not (think you) rather laugh at, then believe the discourse, and suppose you rather went about to puzzle then instruct him? Doubtlesse a Bat may as soone face the Sun at noone day, or a purblind man read the smallest print at a miles distance, as a Carnall man can dive into, or discover

cover such abstruse, sublime *Mysteries*. 'Tis the Word alone and spirit of God that unlocks unto us these *hidden things of God*, which blockish nature can never understand, much lesse discover. And therefore when *Paul* spoke unto the *Athenians* concerning the Resurrection, the text saith *some of them mocked*, and the same *Apostle* in the 1 Cor. 7. 2. saith *the Gospell was unto the Greekes foolishnesse*: even the most learned of the *Gentiles* counted these *mysteries* ridiculous and absurd things. Unto these reasons I might adde many more, and answer some objections, but I am afraid I should be tedious. Give me leave now but in a word or two particularly to apply of this point unto our selves, what hath been Doctrinally spoken as touching the *Gentiles*, and so I shall conclude.

First: then this should make us bewaile the sad losse we sustained by *Adams Apostacy*; us I say, for we are all by nature *Gentiles*, neither is there any man borne a Christian, As then when the sunne is in a very

great Eclipse, every man is apt to be stru^{ct} with hor^rour and Amazement, so likewise when we consider, how strange an Eclipse this *primitive glorious light* hath suffered through sinne, we ought to be smitten through with greife, and seriously to bewaile the cause of it. When a man looketh upon the Venerable ruines of some ancient, stately edifice, how apt is he to weepe and melt over its desolations? And shall Man, that admirable fabrick and Master-peice of his Creatour, fall into such confusion and darknesse, and wee be insensible of his ruines, and, as *Nero* once did upon *Rome*, looke merrily upon his destruction? Certainly, were not a man wholly Engulphed in carnall pleasures, were not his heart so deeply steeped in worldly delight, he would sometimes let fall a teare or two upon the sad reliques of his *Primitive Glory*, and mourne over his former happinesse, now entomb^d in nothing but Misery and Darknesse. For doubtlesse great matter there will be of sorrow unto
us

us , to see that glorious fabrick and beautifull Image of God sullied over with sinne and uglinessse ; that *Understanding which is the candle of the Lord*, Prov. 20. 27. Now so overcharged with ignorance , unbeliefe and falshood ; with ignorance, in being not able to fathome either naturall Causes or supernaturall mysteries ; with unbeliefe , in its backwardnesse to assent unto such things which are beyond the reach of purblind nature ; and with falsehood, in its misapprehending and misjudging the truths of God ; to see likewise what rebellious tumults and disorders there are in those *Affections*, which Originally were quietly subordinated unto the dictates and guidance of Reason ; how madly they cast off the reins , and rush into sinne, as a horse rusheth into the battle ; how wildly they rage and Tyrannize over the discursive rationall facultie, either bribing it to assent unto such things which upon deliberation it must needs disapprove off, or else violently tugging and haling it to

give way unto the Execution of them. To consider also how that *Conscience* which primitively did enjoy a sweet tranquillity and peace, is now lashed with the guilt of *Sinne*, affrighted with the glarings and preapprehensions of *Hell fire*, yea and become a very *μορμαλυνετον* a bugbeare unto us, a *speculum* and lookingglasse to reflect unto us both our Temporall and Eternall misery. I might here make an *Anatomy* of the whole man, and shew unto you how in every part and faculty of the soule that *Glorious Light*, which God originally imprinted in our first parents, is now dimme and almost quite extinguished through sinne, such is the strange malignity of it to deface and blurre the clearest Characters of God and Goodnesse in man. And therefore it should mightily humble every one of us, when we consider, that the *Light* whereby we primitively were directed unto Heaven, and so sweet a communion with God himselve, is now so obscure in us, that we are faine to grope after him in the darke, with whom

whom before we had so familiar Acquaintance. And then it should cause us to pray unto God, to enlighten our minds, to repaire this decayed lumpe with the Oyle of his Grace, that we may be enabled to seeke after him in the way that he will be found, *to bring us out of darknesse into his marvellous light*; out of the darknesse of ignorance, that we may rightly know him and *Iesus Christ whom he hath sent*; out of the darknesse of errour, that we may know the truth, and *discerne things that differ*; and out of the darknesse of unbelieve, that *believing on him we may not see death, but have everlasting life*.

But now, secondly, as we ought to be humbled in the sense of this our great losse, so ought we likewise, since God hath manifested it unto us, and it is his gift, to be thankfull for the remainders and sparks of this *Light* that now remaine in us: for whereas God might have wrapped us up in eternall darknesse, and have made us as brutish and irrationall as the Beasts we for-

merly had dominion over, yet such was his goodnesse to us, that in the midst of judgements he remembred mercy; and though by reason of sinne he might have deprived us of the very foot-steps and reliques of *Naturall Goodnesse*, yet hath it pleased him still to lend us so much light, as may be a witnesse unto himselfe, and a *Pole-star* as it were, to direct us in the paths of Goodnesse and Civility. Admirable hath beene the effects which even this light hath produced from meere naturall men; those *rationall discourses*, and deep searchings into the bowels of nature, those sublime and raised speculations in things *Philosophicall*, those rare examples of *Temperance, Sobriety, and Justice*, and what not? amongst the very *Heathens*, those curious inventions of *Arts and Sciences*, their civill deportment, and exact conformity unto the lawes and constitutions of their Superiours. What are all these, I say, and many of the like nature, but products and rayes of this *Light*? But now as water, the further it is from the
the

the fountaine, the lesse pure and wholesome is it, so that strength of Reason in the *Heathen Philosophers*, by how much the more it wanders from God the Authour of it, by so much the more deadly and poysonous was it unto them. God did manifest unto the *Gentiles* many usefull and excellent things, but saith the Apostle, *they glorified him not as God, neither were thankful, but became vaine in their Imaginations, and their foolish heart was darkned.* Marke the evill fruits of unthankfulness, they did not acknowledge the Author of these gifts in them, and what followed? they became *Vaine* in their reasonings, or disputations, when God did once leave them unto their owne braines, whereunto they ascribed all their learning. What silly, simple conclusions did they frame concerning him? some, even of their wisest, denying his *Providence*, others againe thinking, forsooth, that the management of the world would be too great a labour for *One* God, devided the burden betweene *Multitudes* of them,

Jupiter,

Jupiter, Pluto, Neptune, and I know not whom of their owne stamp and making: so strangely was their reasons infatuated, that though *they professed themselves to be wise*, yet *they became fooles*, and *changed the glory of the incorruptible God*, &c. Wherefore it mightily concernes every one of us in speciall, whom God hath advanced above the rude and ignorant multitude, to ascribe all our parts and learning unto God, as the Author of every good and perfect gift: who as he can instill the greatest Knowledge into the dullest piece of earth, so can he infatuate and destroy the *Wisedome of the wise*, and bring to nothing the *understanding of the prudent*. Let not then the *wise man glory in his Wisedome*. Alas, without Gods blessing 'twill prove unto him, as one saith, but as the pretious stone in a toad's head, rather a disease then an ornament; and as he said falsely of *Paul*, we may say truly of many men, *that much learning hath made them mad*: for there may be a kind of rationall madnesse; a man may

cum ratione insanire, and that when being unthankfull unto God for what he hath, he makes his learning the fuell of his pride, and so by his reason argueth himselfe into hell. Remember the miserable end of *Herod*, a wise and eloquent man without doubt, for such did the plaudit of the people after his oration proclaime him to be; and yet he was eaten up of wormes. Why? becauſe, ſaith the Text, *he gave not God the glory*. We are apt to alcribe all our wit and learning unto our owne reaſons and inventions, but take heed, *God reſiſteth the proud*; he can by one blaſt of his diſpleaſure enfeeble and weaken the powers of the ſoule, beſott and infatuate the ſtrongeſt judgement, befoole and benumme the quickeſt wit; he can ſend an Apoplexy upon thee, to take away thy Memory, as *Pliny* ſomewhere reports of *Meſſala Corvinus*, that after a ſickneſſe he forgot his owne name: he can lay aſleep our underſtanding in a Lethargie, yea he can in the middeſt of our pride and unthankfulneſſe diſſolve into nothing
by

by a sudden death all our arts and learning, and then *where is the wise? where is the Scribe? where is the dispenser of this world?*

3. The consideration of that knowledge of God and those morall vertues in the very *Gentiles*, should shame and reprove many amongst us, who, even amidst the glorious *Light* of the Holy Gospel, do fall farre short of them. There are many men, even in the Christian world, who, out of a certain proud curiosity, and damnable *Scepticisme*, will call into question the very being of God, and thinke they are then more learned, when they contradict the unanimous consent and current of all men: and there are others againe, who, out of an affected kind of *Atheisme*, and that they might better practise their impieties, do endeavour to suppress and smother all thoughts arising in them of God, Providence, Resurrection, Heaven, and Hell. The former of these you may terme the *Speculative*, the latter the *Practicall Atheist*, then whom, saith
Picus

Picus Mirandula, there is no greater monster in the world. The *Scepticisme*, or rather *Atheisme* of the one, their owne consciences in this world may undeceive, the flames of Hell in the next will more fully resolve; the desperate wickednesse of the other, if unrepented of, must expect by so much the severer censure of Gods wrath, by how much the light they sin against is the greater. For tell mee thou wretch, whosoever thou art, what Hell, what flames shall be prepared for thee? when an *Ethnick Cato* shall come and plead before that dreadfull *Tribunall*, his equity and justice, and thou a *Christian Magistrate* shall be arraigned for thy partiality and wrong dealing: when a *Plato* shall present before God his studiousnesse and temperance, and thou a *Christian Scholar* shalt be condemned for thy Idlenesse and drunkennesse; when a *Stoick* shall stand before the throne with his precisenesse and strict living, and thou a *Protestant* shalt shake in the apprehensions of thy former loosenesse and

and irregular walkings. What shall I say? when a poore *Heathen*, who had nothing but the dimme snuffe of naturall light to direct him, shall be pronounced more righteous thē thou, who hast lived many yeares together under the bright beames and sunshine of the Gospell of Jesus Christ. Be afraid then and confounded ye sinners in *Zion*, you that dare so audaciously to commit those sinnes under the glorious aspect of the Gospell, which those who had but the faint glimpses of the *Deity* would have startled at. Be ashamed that any man should have occasion to cry out, *O Holy Socrates, Holy Plato, and O Devilish Christian, O wicked Protestant.* Our engagements are now greater to serve God, and our accounts will therefore be more heavy if we disobey him: *the times of former ignorance God winked at, but now the axe is laid to the root of the tree. Every tree therefore that bringeth not forth good fruit, shall be hewen downe and cast into the fire.*

Fourthly

4. Fourthly and lastly , the consideration of the *Insufficiency* of this *Light* of nature to save the *Gentiles*, should teach us, First, everlastingly to admire and adore the unfathomable judgments of God unto these *Gentiles* of old, who suffered them to walke in their own wayes, without any glimpses or knowledge of a Saviour, that we might tremble at his deep stupendious dispensations towards these poore sinners, and for ever extoll his mercies towards us, in reserving us unto such glorious times as these of the Gospell are, wherein the Mysteries of Christ are not so much as muffled up in *Types* and *Figures* as among the *Jewes*, much lesse wholly wrapt up in darknesse, and kept totally undiscovered, as they were from the *Gentiles*; but every where gloriously displaid and unfolded before our eyes. And secondly, it may teach us, that neither *Learning* nor *Morall Honesty* can simply in themselves, conduce any thing unto salvation; for both these the *Gentiles* had in a very eminent manner, and yet

yet for ought we know they may be now frying in the flames of Hell. *First* then, not learning; could a man with *Solomon* dive into the nature of all things, even from the tallest *Cedar* to the lowest *shrub*, could he speake in as many Languages as ever the severall builders of *Babell* did, or did all the naturall wisdome of men and Angels concenter and meet in him, yet by all these he is no nearer salvation then a begger, or an Actour drest in Royall apparell is unto a throne: *Surgunt indocti*, &c. t'is a common but true saying: Illiterate ignorant men doe oftentimes rise up and carry away the Crowne of glory, whilest we with all our learning sinke deeper into destruction. Doubtlesse, if *Naturall Abilities* could availe any thing unto salvation, those infernall damned spirits had long since reobtained their Heavenly stations; who yet, notwithstanding all their primitive created wisdome, or their now experimentall acquired knowledge, are, by reason of their sinne, bound in chaines of eternall

nall darknesse, and are there still reserved unto the judgment of the great day. I doe not come here to declaime against *Humane Learning*; Freinds (I suppose) it will find many, even in this our age; Enemies I am sure it hath none, but the ignorant; yet this we may safely say, that without Grace t's but enmity against God, so far namely, from attaining Heaven that it rather makes a man an instrument and weapon of Hell, and Marshalls sin (as I may so speake) in battle array against God. For unlesse it be duely tempered and corrected with Grace, there is I know not what secret poyson and malignity in it, *quorū* as the *Apostle* expresseth it, *1 Cor. 8. 1.* to inflate and puffe men up, to Avocate and take off the mind from heavenly meditations, to bewitch and ensnare the heart with the name of applause & credit of the world; to throw the braine into strange contrivances and excessive cares and turmoyles, how to preserve our reputation, how to rise and grow great in the world, how to promote

E

Faction

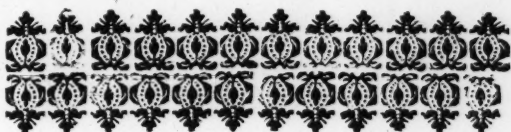
Faction and Interest, how, finally, to please men rather than God. Whereas on the other side, there may be no greater promoter of Gods Glory then a *Sanctified Schollar*; for as in a Picture, though the dark obscure Colours do adde no reall worth unto the more Orientall and bright ones, yet they serve to commend & set them forth; in like manner, though the supernaturall gifts & graces of God may perhaps be nothing bettered by *Humane Learning*, yet, concurring in the same person, they mutually adde lustre, & Ornament to one another. Who a more meeke and pious man then *Moses*? and yet he was Learned in all the Learning of the *Egyptians*. Who more Zealous and fervent in the cause of God then *Paul*? and yet he was brought up at the feet of *Gamaliel*. The summe of all is this, *Naturall Abilities* sublimated and refined by Grace may much advance Gods Glory and our owne salvation, but without faith, and in themselves, they cannot bring us one step forward in our way to Heaven,
nor

nor set us above the pitch of Heathens, *Gentiles*, meere Naturall men.

And as Learning and *Naturall Abilities* cannot, so neither can *Morall Honesty* or civill life lead us in themselves unto heaven. A civill carriage a mild and humble behaviour, temperance in dyet, abstinence from outward grosse acts of Vice, are things very commendable in themselves, as tending much to the advancement of Humane Society, to the removing of scandals amongst Brethren, and to the avoiding of temporall judgments: but then these and other the like virtues, if they may be so termed, a *Cato*, a *Scipio*, a meere *Gentile* may have, and yet be in a damnable Estate. Though a picture be never so exquisitely and curiously drawne, yet it is still but a picture, without life, sense or motion; and so though a man come never so neare a *Saint* in outward appearance, yet he is but a man, dead in sinne, and without the life of Christ. There may be in some men *Politick* and *Secular Ends* to bias them in outward

goodnesse, there may be in others *Carnall Feare* to restraine them from evill, there may be also a kind of conformity to the *Present fashion* of Religion, which may put a man upon a morose behaviour, upon superficiall and outward acts of piety: but then are not all these their *Righteousneses*, think you, as *filthy ragges*? when as they neither proceed from a right principle, the spirit of life; nor are performed in a right manner, neither in sincerity, nor true obedience; nor directed unto a good end, the Glory of God, and edification of their neighbours. So then from hence we may learne, that neither the Heathen, nor any else can attaine unto Heaven by all their Learning, Vertues, Morall Honesty or Goodnesse whatsoever.

For



ROM. I. 20.

For the invisible things of him from the creation of the World, &c.



Hus much shall suffice to be spoken concerning the *light of Nature*: from this verse we shall shew you the knowledge we have of

God from the *Creatures*. Where you have,

1. First, the object knowne, and that either generally set downe, *the invisible things of him*, or more particularly explained, *even his eternall power and Godhead*. Those *invisible things of God* are his *eternall power and Gods head*.

2. Secondly, here is the time when these *invisible things* began to be knowne,

knowne *from the creation of the World.*

3. Thirdly, because all knowledge is originally founded in the Senses, here is the outward instrument, the sight, *are clearly seene*, and the inward instrument whereby we attaine this knowledge, the understanding, *being understood.* And because no object *in se*, much lesse *invisible things*, can be seen without some *medium* to conveigh it unto the organ, you have here,

4. Fourthly, the *Species*, (as I may so speake) or meanes by which we come to see these *invisible things*, the Creatures, *are clearly seene and understood by the things that are made.*

5. Fifthly and lastly, here is the end why God did thus manifest this knowledge unto them, *viz.* that they should be *without excuse.* For the *invisible things, &c.* In the former verse the *Apostle* shewes that the *Gentiles* might know God by the Light of Nature, and lest they should pretend that not to be sufficient, he confirms it by the outward testimony of the creatures in these words, *for the invisible things,*

things of him, &c. 'Tis true, God is
 wrapt up in such a glorious light, that
 no created eye is able to behold him,
 nay the *Seraphims* themselves are said
 to cover their faces with their wings, as
 dazled with that glory and lustre that
 beames from him: and how, may the
Gentile say, can we see this God who
 dwelleth in inaccessible light? How can
 we blear-eyd wormes see him, who is
invisible? why saith Saint *Paul*, these
 are vaine pretences, for the invisible
 things &c. Alas! you can looke no
 where about you, but you may see this
invisible God: each creature reads a
Divinity Lecture unto you, and may
 catechize you in the knowledge of his
 eternall power and Godhead: Τα δα δα βρα
 τς ον, for the invisible things of God. &c.
 By which we must not, as *Origen* did,
 understand *Angels*, for the *Gentiles*
 might by the light of Nature, and by
 rationall discourse and resolution of
 one cause into another, have gathered
 that there was a God, and yet for all
 that be ignorant of *Angels*, as being
 creatures in themselves not any wise
 subject

subject unto sense, from whence their knowledge was deduced: neither could they clearly understand either the nature or being of them by any sensible creature. By *invisible things* then here, we must understand nothing else but what the *Apostle* sets downe: *viz. his eternall power and Godhead*: by which is meant that continuall Power, by which he created, and upheld all things, and that incomprehensible Nature of his, or, as *Musculus* saith, his goodnesse; his Power is every where laid open, and his Nature may every where be understood by the things that are made, *ἐκ κτίσεως κόσμου*, from the creation of the world. By *κτίσεως κόσμου* here, many will have signified the creature of the world, and so they will read it, for the invisible things of him, the creatures of the world, are clearly seen, &c. And this mistake (as I suppose) gave occasion to *Bernard* to interpret it of man, as being call'd creature *κατ' ἐξοχὴν*, *Mark. 16. 15.* Goe ye into all the world, and preach the Gospell, *πᾶσι τῇ κτίσει* to every creature, that is, to every man. But doubtlesse,

doubtlesse, neither the opinion of one or the other can here take place; for besides that it may make some Tautology in the words, since that κτίσις κόσμος and ποιήματα, the *creatures* and the *things that are made* will be all one; besides this inconvenience, I say, the drift of the *Apostle*, and the elsewhere using of the same word for the creation it selfe, as *Mark. 10. 6. from the beginning κτίσεως of the creation God made them male and female*, together with the proposition ἀπὸ, which usually denotes the date or time from whence a thing is deduced, doth make men consent unto our translation; and so *from the creation of the world*, is nothing else but that the creatures ever since the foundation of the world, have alwaies proclaimed and set forth the glory and power of their Creatour. *Are clearely seene, being understood, νοούμενα καὶ δοκῶντα.* The *Hebrewes*, saith *Grotius* on the place, do usually expresse both the inward and outward senses by the terme of seeing, so that according to him, if I misconstrue him not, these
two

two may imply the same thing. But whether they do or no it matters not much: sure I am that the *Apostle* going about to shew by what degrees and steps we may Naturally come to the knowledge of God, it will better consist with the meaning of him to conceive, by καθεσθῆναι, to be meant the outward *Contemplative sense of seeing*, by νοῦν by the inward *Discursive Faculty of the understanding*. For the creatures are first offered to the sight, and from thence are conveyed to the understanding, which presently must needs collect some *Supreme Authour and Maker* of them. The beasts may see the creatures, but they cannot know God from them, because they are void of reason; A man sees, & concludes there is a God from them because his *sight* is improv'd and backt, on by an *understanding*. Τοῖς ποτῆμασι by the things that are made, that is, by the whole Creation, Sun, Moone, Stars, Water, Earth and all. Some by this word understand the workes of God in generall, and so include the

the workes of *Providence* as well as the workes of *Creation*, which sense, since it offers no injury to the Text, I shall make bold to follow, and shew how as well by the workes of *Providence* as *Creation* God may be knowne. For *that they are without excuse.* εἰς τὸ εἶδ' αὐτὰς ἀναπολογήτους, 'Tis in the margin, *that they may be without excuse,* which I conceive to be the most genuine and nearest translation of the two. For indeed this εἰς τὸ here in the Text may denote the end for which the knowledge of the creatures was manifested unto the *Gentiles*, as well as the consequent, or what followed upon the manifestation of them. But what may some one say? Doth God give knowledge onely to condemne us? doth he manifest his creatures unto the *Gentiles* meerely to make them *inexcusable* before him? Wee answer that the originall and primary end why God primitively impressed upon man the light of nature and the knowledge of the creatures, was that thereby he might know and worship him aright; for had man continued in his *Created*

integrity, these two Bookes had beene sufficient to instruct him in the service of his Maker ; but now man by sinne having defaced that *Glorious Image* of God wherein he was made, it was not possible for him either by the light of *Nature* , or conduct of the *Creatures* to attaine unto Heaven : there being another new way found out to save man , even by the *Blood of Iesus*, the two former are made altogether ineffectuall , either to guide him in the true *Worship* of God , or instruct him in any *saving knowledge* of him. Well then, what must be the end and use of them ? they remaine still that's certaine , the light of *Nature* is yet in us , though much blotted , the *Creatures* in themselves are as capable to guide us unto God , as ever , though through man's *Blindnesse* and *Ignorance* they are made ineffectuall : therefore there must needs step in another end and use of them , and that is to stop our mouthes , and make us void of excuse before God . Had this light of *Nature*,
nure,

ture, and booke of the *Creatures* beene never made effectuell unto mans salvation, the *Gentiles* who had never any other light, might very well plead excuse; but now they being by our owne default become unavailable, and God being not at all bound to bestow any further *light* upon any, it comes to passe that the *Gentiles* being not able to walke according to the *knowledge* they primitively had, are left without excuse. So then the Essentiall, Primary end of the *Light of Nature*, and the *Creatures* was to instruct man in the *knowledge* and true *worship* of God; the consequentiaall, if I may so terme it, and accidentary end is to the intent that they may be without excuse. This shall suffice concerning the words themselves, on which I have been the larger, because the Exposition of them may give much light to my ensuing discourse, which shall be grounded upon this proposition: viz. *That God, though in his owne Nature invisible, may yet by a Gentile, a meere Naturall man,*
be

be reacht unto, and discovered in his
Workes. For the better clearing of this
 Point, it will be convenient to distin-
 guish concerning the *Workes* of God,
 which are either *ad intra*, or *ad extra*;
 those *ad intra* are such which have no
 other object then God himselfe, and
 are eternally bounded within his owne
 nature; such as are the *Eternall genera-*
tion of his Sonne, and *Proceeding* of
 the Holy Ghost: now as no one know-
 eth the inward workings and contri-
 vances of the mind, save the *spirit of a*
man, or he to whom he revealeth them,
 in like manner, there is no one that can
 fathom, or dive into these inward es-
 sentiall *Workes* of God, save God him-
 selfe, or those to whom his Word hath
 communicated them: nay indeed the
 best Saints of God in this their *Earth-*
ly Tabernacle, though never so much
 enlightened by his Word and Spirit,
 cannot perfectly know, or conceive
 these his ineffable *Workes* and *Myste-*
ries. True, they may substantially and
 in generall know that such *Workes*
 there be, for they are revealed in his
 Word;

Word ; but then the strange manner of the *Generation* of the one , and *Proceeding* of the other , that admirable *Energy* and divine *Reflexion*, by which he understands himselfe from all Eternity, they cannot but by *Analogy*, faint resemblances and conjectures apprehend ; much lesse then can a meere *Naturall man*, a *Gentile* discover and trace either God in these *Workes* , or these *Workes* in God . The second sort of Gods *Workes* are those *ad extra* : viz. such whose effect is in something without himselfe , or whose proper subject is the *Creature* : and these again are either such which do chiefly concerne us in another case , as the Election of some unto salvation, and reprobation of other unto damnation, or else such which immediately concerne either the Being , or Preservation of the *Creature* in this world ; and these properly are the *Workes* of *Creation* and *Providence*; & from these chiefly (I say) it is, that a *Naturall man* knowes God. This we shall prove, First, in the *Workes* of *Creation*. Secondly, in the *Workes* of *Providence*

Providence. And first we shall shew in generall, that the *Creatures* in themselves doe every where set forth and proclaime a God. Secondly, we shall shew by what wayes and meanes the *Creatures* doe thus bring us unto the knowledge of God.

1. First then, that the creatures doe every where proclaime a God is manifest from *Psal.* 19. 1, 2, 3, 4. *the heavens declare the glory of God, and the firmament sheweth his handy worke, &c.* That glorious canopy which we behold above us, however in it selfe mute and dumbe, doth yet notwithstanding set forth, as it were, unto us a declaration of it's Creatour's Power, Goodnesse, and Wisdome: of his power in the framing and contriving, so excellent a piece; of his Goodnesse, in ordering all it's Motions and Revolutions unto the benefit of his *Creatures*; and of his Wisdome in allotting it so commodious a position and structure unto the performance of those offices, to which he hath ordained it: and so *vers.* 2. *Day unto day uttereth speech, and night unto*

unto night sheweth knowledge: that is, doth sufficiently Discipline and Instruct men in the knowledge of God, so that the most sottish and rude *Gentile* cannot plead ignorance. For what though their *Philosophers* alone could tell the severall vertues and influences of the *Starres*, the periodicall motion of the *Sun & Moon*, their just *Horizontall* elevation and depression, and the like; yet day unto day, and night unto night doth sufficiently shew forth, even to the most ignorant, who is the Authour of this their Succession and Revolution: for so the *Psalmist* goes on *vers. 3, 4. there is no speech nor language where their voyce is not heard, their line, Scriptura ipsorum, their Writing is gone out throughout all the earth, and their words to the end of the world.* Marke here how the *Creatures* are made the *pracones*, as it were of God, the *Cryers* and *Heraulds* of his glory. Doubtlesse there is a certaine kind of dumbe eloquence, even in *Inanimate Creatures* to perswade men to subscribe unto the mighty *Creator* of all things. Where-

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fore it was not without some cause, that *Hermes* an Auncient Philosopher among the *Heathens*, called the world the *Image* of God : for as the coine of a King doth represent the King whose coine it is , or as in the beholding of a curious Edifice, we cannot choose but in it admire the Art and Dexterity of the Artificer ; in like manner the admirable structure of this neat *Universe*, the curious and subordinated disposition which one creature hath to another, the exact *Symmetry* and proportion of each part unto the whole , must needs lead us unto the *Creatour* of them , and cause us to admire the infinite Power and Perfection of him, who out of nothing could raise so glorious a fabrick. As then *Protagenes* at the very sight of a curious picture did presently guesse it to be the workmanship of *Apelles* , because he knew that none could doe the like ; so likewise in the contemplation of these glorious *Creatures* of God , we may straightway conclude him to be the *Author* of them , because they are beyond

beyond the contrivance and art of any other : For there is no finite being that can make or adde one haire unto our heads, much lesse can contribute any sense, life, or vitall motion unto any thing. Many men indeed, as *Zenxis*, *Albertus Magnus*, and others have endeavoured to imitate the God of nature in his workes, but never could any one by all his Apish art, frame a *naturall* and *reall creature* : for besides the limitednesse of his *Nature*, the narrownesse of his *Understanding*, the inabilities of him to find out the true forme, and peculiar operations of all things, there is a certaine stubbornesse and disobedience (if I may so speake) in the matter it selfe, whereby it scornes, as it were, to be wrackt and tortured into another forme, then what the Sovereigne of all things is pleased to impresse upon it. God can out of dust build a man, but t'is impossible for any man, be he of the most exquisite wit, invention, and judgment as he will, ever to

raise the least contemptible Creature out of the most refined Matter. It remaineth therefore that the most minute, inconsiderable, least thing in the world doth proclaime the power and greatnesse of a God, and so consequently lead us into the knowledge of him in whom all things *live, move and have their being*; for as pricks and quavers in *Musick* do commend the cunning of the *Artist*, as well as louder and longer notes; or as the least pinne or wheele in a watch, both by its Use and Ornament, doth set forth the art of the *Watch-maker*, even so the meanest and least of Gods creatures doe sufficiently proclaime the *Power, Wisdome, and Vertue* of their maker. Hence it is that the snow and haile are by the *Psalmist* brought in praising of God, *Psalm. 148.8.* The whole world what is it else saith *Cusanus* but God *Paraphased* and exprest: here is the onely difference betweene the smaller and greater creatures, that in the one, God is set forth in Characters as t'were, in the other, in

in more great and Capitall Leters.

But thus much concerning the first point, which is to shew in generall that God is every where proclaimed and set forth by his *Creatures*. We shall now, secondly, shew you how, and in what way God may be knowne by his *Creatures*. *Theodoret*, saith there be five wayes by which we may come to the knowledg of God: the first is, by considering the Heavens, the Moone and the Starres which he hath ordained, the various motions, designes, and influences, the rankes and battalies (as I may so speak) of that *Heavenly Host* do abundantly shew that there is some *Supreme General* and commander, by whose Wisdom and conduct they are thus managed. His second way is by considering the *Elements* below; that the wild raging *Ocean* should not presently overflow the whole face of the ground and that the *Earth*, naturally the heaviest of all simple bodies, should yet for all that be above the *Waters*: doubtlesse this is not from any blind chance

or *fortune*, but from a God, which stilleth the raging of the *Seas* and made nesse of the *Waves*, and who, from the creation, for the good & commodity of man, gave the *Earth* the upper hand of the *Waters*. His third way, is from the structure of *Mans Body*; wee neede go no further then our selves (as you shall heare more at large) for the knowledge of God: he is the worse of *Scepticks*, that will deny himselfe, and the truth of his owne being; and he the most ignorant of *Atheists*, who cannot from himselfe conclude a God.

4. From the invention of *Arts* and *Sciences*, which doubtlesse are from God, as being only the *Authour* of every good and perfect gift. His fifth and last way, is from the *Command* and *Rule* which men have over *Other Creatures*; for doubtlesse 'tis God alone and not chance that causeth beasts of farre greater strength then any man patiently to submit unto his yoke and *dominion*. These are the five waies of *Theodorez* by the which (saith he) we may come to know God.

But

But I dare not trespasse so much upon you, as particularly to explaine them. I shall only therefore in generall shew by what degrees and steps, or rather, by what kind of workings the understanding may argue from the *Creature* to the *Creatour* : and the first way by which we may thus know God, is *per viam negationis*, by denying: that is, such things to the *Creatour*, which we find to be imperfections and defects in the *Creature* ; for when a *Naturall mind* shall consider that corruption which the *Creature* is subject unto, those blemishes which it is sullied withall, it must needs conclude some *higher Being* , which is not incident to any of these. As *Errata's* and faults in Printing doe suppose a more perfect copy, so likewise the imperfections and defects of the *Creature* , which are as it were the very transcript of God himselfe, may put us in mind of a more *Perfect Originall* , and *Exact platforme* of all things. The *Psalmist*, *Psal. 115. 8.* saith of *Idols* , *that they*

that make them are like unto them, that is, as vaine, mutable, and perishing as themselves: whereby likewise it implies on the contrary, that the true God is not like unto his *Creatures* in any such respect; because they all participating whatsoever they have of him, and depending on him, are subject to be destroyed, and altered according to the pleasure of him that made them, for *hath not the Potter power over his clay?* but now God being neither subject to any superiour or inferiour *Cause*, must needs be in himselfe Incorruptible, Immateriall and Unchangeable. Many things are in God, which also by way of *Analogie* and resemblance are in the *Creatures*, as Goodnesse, Truth, &c. and many things are in the *Creatures*, *quatenus Creatures*, which cannot at all be *Predicated*, or spoken of God: such as are Locality, Finitenesse, a limited power, and the like; now as a meere *Naturall* man will conclude *Positively*, that there

there is a God, who is all goodnesse, all truth, because he sees the *Creatures* depending on him, to have something of these in him; so likewise may he *negatively* conclude, that there is a God, who is neither Finite, of limited Power, or in a Place, because he sees these to be Imperfections, and Impotencies in the very *Creatures*. As for example, to explaine my meaning, in a curious *Picture* a man may not onely discover the eminent art of the *Limner*, but also gather, that though it be *quatenus* a *Picture* very Exact and Perfect, yet that it is withall very much deficient, and destitute of those perfections of the *Limner*, life, sense, and motion: so likewise though the *Creature*, *sub ratione creaturae*, may be in it's kind perfect, yet we may notwithstanding, from it's being a *Creature* Finite, and limited, conclude that there is a God, who is not subject to this Finitenesse, and limitednesse, but is an Infinite, Incomprehensible God, *Blessed for ever.*

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The second way by which we may gather that there is a God by the *Creatures*, is *per viam causalitatis*, by way of causality and influence (as I may so terme it;) for when a man shall looke out into the world, and behold the admirable and beautifull *Palace*, how stately it is roofed above with an *Heaven*, every where spangled and adorned with shining *Pearle-like Starres*, how curiously 'tis paved below with an *Earth*, alwaies teeming with *Riches* and *Varieties*, how strongly fenced and walled about with an *Ocean* full of those scaly inhabitants, the *Fish* thereof; when we consider (i say) the *World* with the *Glory* thereof, we must needs acknowledge some one as the *First cause* of it; and unto whose glory, as it's ultimate end, it is ordained, even God Almighty, *From whom and unto whom are all things*. As in the viewing of a *Clocke*, the hammer striking upon the bell, leads us unto the next wheele, that immediately moves it, this wheele
unto

unto another that moves it also, and so we are led on till at last we come to consider the *Artificer* himself that Originally caused them all thus to move: so likewise from the dependences and subordinations which one *Inferiour cause* hath upon another, wee are brought to the consideration of the *Supream* Governour and *Mover* of all. I (saith God) will heare the Heavens, and they shall heare the Earth, and the earth shall heare the Corne, and the Wine, and the oyle, and they shall heare Jezreel: *Hos.* 2. 21, 22. Here is the order and concatenation of *Inferiour Causes*; Jezreel crying unto the corne, and the corne unto the earth, the earth unto the heavens, and both corne, earth, and heavens crying and leading unto God. You know that absurdities will follow in *Philosophy*, upon the allowing a *progressus ad infinitum* (i. e.) an endlesse rising up of one *Cause* above another, without a *non ultra*, and resting in one *Prime* and *Originall* one, which may stay and
ease

ease the mind in it's inquiries and porings upon the reasons of things. The inconveniences that would follow upon such a position were (as I conceive) next unto the *Light of Nature*, the maine ground and motive that made the *Heathen* acknowledge a God: and hence it was too (as I suppose) that though many amongst the *Heathens* maintained the *World* to be *Eternall*, yet they acknowledged withall God as the *Cause* of it: As the Sun is the cause of light, though light be coëxistent with the Sunne. True, there were some few amongst them, who held that God was not the *Cause* of the world, but *Austin* very well called this their opinion *intollerabilis error*, a most intollerable, senselesse error, as being repugnant to the very *Light of Nature*, and convictions they might have from the very *Creatures* themselves. I might here enter very pertinently upon a discourse against the *Eternity* of the *World*, but it being a businesse of *Philosophy*, and besides
having

having not had time to weigh and debate the matter in mine owne thoughts, I shall omit it. What remaines is this, that God by way of *Causality*, or by our arguing from the effect to the cause, may be known in the *Creatures*. The third way by which we may know God in his *Creatures* is *per viam eminentia*, which floweth from the two former: for because God hath not those Imperfections in *Being* and *Operation* as his *Creatures* have, and because he is the *Prime Cause* and *Mover* of all things, therefore it will follow, that he is the most *Perfect Being*, that he doth *Eminently* containe whatsoever worth and goodnesse is scattered in his *Creatures*: as we may argue and say, that because all light that is in the aire, be it little or much, proceedeth from the Sunne, and therefore the Sunne hath it in a more eminent and excellent degree; so likewise may we conclude, that since all Power, Goodnesse, Love, and the like, issueth from God unto the *Creatures*,

tures, therefore God hath these infinitely more excellent in him, then the *Creatures*. Therefore we read that in God are riches of grace, and treasures of wisdom, and the like: *Ephes. 2. 7. Col. 2. 3.* In the *Creature* there is no Goodnesse, but what is derivative and participated of God, but what is dregg'd and allayd with evill, and therefore Finite and Limited. But now Goodnesse is *Essentiall* unto God, and therefore, as himselfe, is Infinite, Independent, pure, without measure; and therefore as the *Sunne* hath for these many yeares together scattered light, and influence, dayes and yeares upon the world, and yet doth still remaine the same *Sunne*, as full of light as ever; so likewise, though God from the *Creation* of the world hath not ceased continually to bestow, and communicate his riches unto his severall *Creatures*, yet he is still the same God, as *Rich in Goodnesse* as ever. Wherefore doubtlesse it will come to passe, that by these glimmerings, and

and faint rayes of *Goodnesse* in the *Creatures*, a meere *Naturall* man, an *Heathen* may conclude that there is a *God*, in whom such *Goodnesse* dwelleth more fully and plentifully.

And so much shall suffice to be spoken concerning the second point, and the *Doctrinall* part of my *Text*; let mee crave your patience now, but to winde up all in a word of *Application*, and so I shall conclude.

This should confute the damned *Atheists* who either in *Speculation* or *Practice* doth deny the *Being* of that *Deity*, whom these creatures doe so clearly represent, and voluntarily hoodwinke himselfe from beholding the footsteps of these *infallible things* of *God*, in the *Workes* which he hath done; for so saith the *Apostle*, 2 *Pet.* 3. 5. *This they are willingly ignorant of, that by the Word of God the heavens were of old, and the earth standing out of the waters.* Doublesse those men were wilfully blind, who when the *Glorious Booke* of the *Crea-*
tures

Use I.

tures is laid wide open before them ,
 can yet notwithstanding not read the
Authour of them : for looke up un-
 to the *Heavens* thou *Atheist*, and view
 that *Glorious cover*, which every where
 attires this Lower world , and then
 tell me , is it not a God that thus
spreadeth out the Heavens like a curtaine?
 are not those glorious bodies the
Workes of his hands ? or thinkest thou
 that *Chance* or *Fortune* could so uni-
 formly , for so many thousand yeares
 together , turne about that vast body
 of the *Sunne* , which so constantly , as
a bridegroome comes out of his chamber,
and rejoyceth as a strong man to runne
his course ? Thinkest thou that those
Starres thou beholdest , were set a run-
 ning by any kind of *Fate* ? or that they
 throw downe their *Influences* upon us
 by any designe of their owne , without
 a guidance of *Providence* ? Looke down
 upon the *Earth* : and tell mee who
 was it that laid the *foundations* , and
 the *corner stone* thereof ? Who was
 it that founded it upon the *Flouds* ?
 Could

Could it be brought to passe by
Chance, or any *Confluence* of *Atomes*,
 that this little ball of *Earth* should
 hang up in the aire thus *Immoveable*,
 poys'd by it's owne proper weight,
 and not rather *reele* to and fro, and
stagger like a drunken man; that the
 wild *Ocean* doth not challenge the
 upper hand of the *Earth*, and over-
 flow the surface of it; that even the
Raine should so strangely ascend up
 into the *Clouds*, and there be *Bottled*
 up for the use of man: and that there
 should be no meanes, even in the joynt
Powers of all men, to *unstop* those
bottles, or command the least drop
 from them? From whence come all
 these things? must thou not of neces-
 sity say, from some Almighty Power,
 who *hangeth* the *Earth* upon nothing,
 and who *ruleth* the raging of the *Sea*,
 and *madnesse* of the *waves*, and who
bindeth up the *waters* in the thick *clouds*,
 and the *cloudes* are not rent under them.
 There is not a *Creature* in the world,
 from the highest *Heaven*, to the lowest

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Earth

earth; from whence thou maist not copy out a Lesson of the Eternall power and Godhead, and in whom as in a glasse, thou maist not see the Invisible things of him clearly reflected unto us from the things that are made. The serious contemplation of which, cannot but make the most Sottish Atheist cry out with the Prophet. O Lord, how manifold are all thy workes, in wisdom hast thou made them all, the earth is full of thy riches.

2. Secondly, hereby we may be taught, what is the right use of *Philosophy*, and other the like *Arts*, whereby we make inspection into the *Creatures*, namely, that thereby we may be raised up unto the consideration of Gods *Eternall Power* and *Godhead*. The examining and considering of the *Creatures*, should raise our mindes up unto God. There is no man so much an *Atheist*, but, if he hath eyes and reason, may be convinced of his folly by the very *Creatures*: For as *Job* said unto *Zophar*, *Job* 12. 8, 9. *Speak to the earth, and it shall teach thee, and the fishes of the sea*

sea shall declare unto thee. Who knoweth not that in all these the hand of the Lord hath wrought this? So we may say unto such men, go to the Inanimate Creatures, and they will teach thee God; goe to the Vegetatives, and thou shalt find that every Herbe proclaimes a God; goe to the Sensitive Creatures, and there thou shalt finde the yong ravens calling upon him for meat, and upbraiding thy damnable sottishnesse, who deniest him whom even they acknowledge: goe, lastly, unto thy selfe, and so the very consideration of that curious art, and cunning in the contrivance of thy owne Body, will lead thee up into heaven, and unto a God, and make thee cry out with the Psalmist, I am wonderfully and fearfully made, marveilous are thy workes. Methinks it might be a notable way to convince an Atheist, even by the structure of his owne Body, and instead of more subtile Arguments, to read an Anatomy Lecture unto him: for doubtlesse, could he be but distinctly led through all the Regions

of the *Body* , and there be shewne, in the upper room thereof, the curious fabricke of the tender *Braine* , lodged in its severall cels , and strongly fortified with a wall of *scull* , and the unknowne *Labyrinths* and *Meanders* of an innumerable company of *veines* continually watering it: in this also could he but be made to understand the incomparable structure of the *Eye*; without, empaled about with *strong bones* , and sheltred with their *lids* , which as trap-doores being let downe hinder forraine injuries ; within, adorned with its severall *Tunicles* and *Humors* , with its *Membrains* and *Nerves* , which constantly supplie unto it *Spirit* and vigour from the *Braine*: from the very *Motion* of which *Eye* towards heaven it was, that *Tully* concluded a God there, able to help it. Could he (I say) be further shewne the convenient position of the *Heart* , whereby, as from the *Center* , it doth give *Life* and *Motion* to the whole; the orderly *Pulsations* of it , whereby the *blond* , which otherwise would become thick

thick and muddy, is made to runne cleare and sweet throughout all the *Conduits* of the *Body*. To be short, were he made acquainted with the position, and severall offices of the *cooling lungs*, the *seething Stomack*, the *dying Liver*, the *fertile Wombe*, wherein, as the *Prophet* speakes, he is so curiously wrought. Besides these, were hee shewne the excellent use, and admirable compofure of the *Muscles*, *Arteries*, *Veines*, *Bones*, *Cartilages*, and all other *Organs* and parts which concur to the making up of this *Little World*; what thinke you then, would this *Atheist* say? would he not presently cry out *wonderfully, and fearfully am I made*, none but the *Power* of God can make these, and none but the *Wisdom* of God can dispose theie so made, unto so excellent uses. Certainly, the very consideration of a *Body* so neatly joynted and compacted together, so rarely contrived in the mutual *Offices* and *Helps* of each part unto the other, so well ordered and dispos-

sed in every the least *Particle* and Minute *fibra* thereof, must needs raise a mind not wholly shut up in *darknesse*, and wilfull *ignorance* to the contemplation of the *Power* and *Wisdom*e of God. 'Twas a notable complaint somewhere of *Galen* in one of his bookes *de usu partium*, that men would be very apt to admire the Art and Workmanship of a *Phidias*, or an *Apelles*, but then very backward and averse from admiring and considering of God in this his farre more excellent *Worke* of *Man*. I feare I may take up his complaint in these our dayes: Many amongst us do know much of the *Nature* of the *Creatures*, and of the *body* of *man*, but then, I feare, 'tis a little vaine discourse and ostentation, or a satisfaction of our *Curiosities* that is aimed at herein, more then the *Praise* and the *Glory* of God, and the better contemplating of him in his *Creatures*: whereas those that pretend unto the study of *Nature*, and the *Creatures*, have most reason of all
other

other men to be *Religious*, and to thinke upon God, because they cannot but continually view in them the *Finger*, and *Foot-steps* of God himselfe. 'Twas therefore a true saying of a renowned *Statesman* and *Scholar* of our owne, that a smattering of naturall *Philosophy* inclines men to *Atheisme*, a deeper knowledge thereof brings them about to religion: because they better knowing the chain and linke of things within themselves, and the severall strange *Natures* and *Generations* of them, will the easier be led unto God, and his providence. Doubtlesse could but a good *Philosopher*, and a good *Christian* concenter in the same *Person*, as his *Piety* would much elevate his *Philosophy*, so would his *Philosophy* much confirme and advance his *Piety*: for certainly a serious inspection into the *Creatures* must needs then worke much upon his *Affections*, and beget in him a farther *Obedience* unto love, feare, and admiration of that God, whom by experience he finds to be
the

the Authour, Preserver, and Governour of so *Wonderfull Workes*. The *Booke* of the *Creatures*, indeed, cannot alone instruct us in a *Saving knowledge* of God, but being bound up together, as it were, with the *Booke* of the *Scriptures*, we may see in them much of God, and learne much from them for the advantage of our *Salvation*.

3. Thirdly, then we should be exhorted every one of us to study God in his *workes*.

1. Be exhorted to study him in his *Creatures*; behold a faire *Volume* laid open before your eyes, each *Legible Character* whereof doth no lesse speake the Intention and Study, then Command the Admiration. To passe by so Excellent *Workes* without any consideration, will argue a Base *Stupidity* in us, and a baser *Contempt* of Gods glory. Shall a *Play* or a *Romance*, shall an *Aristotle*, or a *Tully* take up our *Meditations*, our daies and nights, and shall not the *Workes* of God have our *spare Hours*,
those

those *Works*, which, being duly considered, may be as so many rounds in *Jacobs Ladder* to lead us into *Heaven*, and give us a *Glimps* of that *Infinity*, which *bleare-eyd Nature* can never so well kenne or mount unto? For what *Seneca* said of a *Man*, we may say likewise of all other *Creatures*, there dwels a *God* and *Divinity* in them; in the meanest, namely, of them we may trace the footsteps of a *Deity*, and find out him in whom we live, move, and have our being. Since then *God* hath endowed us with so noble a *Sense*, as our sight is, whereby we may clearely see those *Invisible things* of him, and since this *Light* of ours is further improved by the eye of an *understanding soule*, let us not be as the *Psalmist* calls them, *Brutish Men* that know not these things: As *Beasts* which commonly looke upon this *Palace* and no more. But when we view these *Bodies* of ours, let us endeavour to see a *God*, who covered us in our *Mothers Wombe*, and who still upholdeth these *Mud-wals* of clay by the *Power* of his
Word.

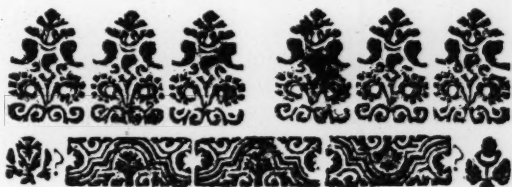
Word. When we walke into the feilds & there looke upon the corne, the *Herbs* and the *grasse*, let us meditate upon the God of them, who once said, *let the earth bring forth grasse, the herb yeilding flowers, and the fruit-tree yeilding fruit after his kind: and it did so; and if so be God so cloth the grasse of the field, which to day is, and to morrow is cast into the Oven; shall he not much more cloth thee, O thou of little faith?* When thou lookest up into *Heaven*, meditate upon that God, which ordained the *Moone* and the *Stars*, and which maketh *Arcturus*, *Orion*, and *Pleiades*, and the *Chambers of the south*. When thou viewest any *Creature*, consider whose stamp it beares, and whose goodnesse is shewne in the creating and preserving of it: *Lastly*, let us be exhorted to study God in his *Workes of Providence*, and in his *dispensations towards mankind*; there are many, even amongst us *Christians*, who seeing things happen contrary to their desires and *Carnall Reasons*, as the godly to be dejected, and the wicked advanced,

advanced, doe implicitly deny a God,
 or at least wise, with the *Epicureans*,
 think that he sits idle in Heaven,
 without any respect or care had unto
Mankind: whereas, did we not measure
 the depth of *Gods dispensations* by our
 owne shallow carnall reasons, we might
 even in the greatest huddle and confusi-
 on of things see a God, steering and
 directing them all to his owne *Glory*.
 Though then thou seest sinne every
 where, even in the streets, to abound,
 know also that there is no evil in the
City which the Lord hath not done;
 though thou seest the ungodly to flourish
 like a green bay-tree, and with David
 art puzzled with the consideration of it,
 yet with him enter into the *House of*
God, and then thou shalt see the end of
 these men, namely, how that there is a
 God, who setteth them in slippery places,
 and who onely feedeth them for the
 day of slaughter.

Well then, to conclude, both in the
Workes of Creation and Providence, we
 ought to study God, because that in
 them

them we may read those *invisible things* of him : both of them are as *spectacles* unto us, to help us in the viewing of this *Invisible God*; and though indeed in *Christ* and in the *Scriptures*, we may read him farre more *distinctly*, yet so long as wee are in these our *Earthly Tabernacles*, we ought to make use of these *Representations* of his *Majesty*, till the time come, when wee shall not stand in need of these *spectacles*, when this glasse of the *Creatures* shall vanish in the *Generall Conflagration* of all things, and then we shall behold him *face to face*, and enjoy a most glorious prospect of his *Divinity* in those new heavens for evermore.

FINIS.



2 Tim. 3. 16, 17.

*All Scripture is given
by inspiration, and is
profitable for Doctrine,
for Reproofe, &c.*



EE are now to speak
concerning the per-
spicuity and perfecti-
on of the Scriptures;
concerning which I
shall be more brieft
as I told you, because they have been

I

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so largely handled already by sundry
 learned men, unto the substance of
 whose writings there can indeed
 scarce any thing be added, un-
 lesse perhaps farther illustration, and
 a more practicall handling of them ;
 the perspicuity of Scripture may be
 inferred from the use of it, here set
 down by the *Apostle*, it is profitable
 for *Doctrines*, (saith he) for *Reproof*, for
Correccion, for *Instruction in Righteous-*
nesse ; foure uses are here made men-
 tion of in Scripture, the two Doctri-
 nall, teaching of truth and confuting
 errorrs ; the two last practicall, cor-
 rection of vice and instruction of
 holy conversation ; from whence
 I inferre, that since it doth
 thus teach, thus convince, it
 must needs carry with it such
 a light and evidence of truth, that
 neither its doctrines may be rejected
 through their obscurity, nor its ar-
 guments gainsayd for want of cleere-
 nesse, and since also it is usefull for
 Reformation of manners, and di-
 rection in a holy life, needs must its
 rules

rules for this purpose be so plainly set down, that every one concerned in such dutys, may be thereby instructed unto holinesse, the Scriptures may be termed the first Elements of a Christian, a Child may go to schoole unto them, for saith the Apostle they are profitable *we's wand'ar*, that is, as the word implyes, for instruction of Children, even a Child may spell out the Scriptures, what is his duty toward God and his neighbour, and doubtlesse if a Child may read and understand the Scriptures, they are not so obscure, so intricate, so perplexed as some conceive them to be: in prosecution therefore of this point we shall shew 1. that the Scriptures are in themselves perspicuous. 2. That they are more or lesse perspicuous according to the diversity of the subject entertaining them. 3. We shall endeavour to shew some reasons why God hath left some places more obscure then other.

1. First, that the Scriptures are in themselves perspicuous, may appear

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by severall texts. *Pf. 19.8.* The commandement of the Lord is pure, enlightning the eyes; they are pure, and therefore not alloy'd with any mudnesse, or clouded with any obscurity; they enlighten the eyes, and therefore carry along with them such evident plainenesse, that he who is not quite blinded may easily perceive the truth of them: So *Pf. 119. 105.* *Thy Word is a Lamp unto my feet, and a light unto my paths;* it doth, that is, by its perspicuity, and clearenesse, both as a lampe and light direct me in all my goings: hence also it is, that the Scripture is called *2 Pet. 1.19.* *A light that shineth in darke places,* denoting out unto us, that the word not only in its own nature is light, but also that wheresoever it commeth it dispelleth darknes, as the Sun at his appearance forceth away the night, the fogs and mists, as *Solomon*, a man of the profoundest wisdom that ever lived, said, that he writ to give subtilty to the simple, to the young men knowledge and discretion, *Prov. 1.4.* there
is

is in the Word of God such innate plainenesse and perspicuity, that the simplest man may thereby be enlightened, the youngest instructed: but here when we say the Scriptures are plain and easy to be understood, we must distinguish concerning fundamentalls and things necessary to be known, and circumstantialls, or such things whose exact knowledge is not so necessary unto salvation, those matters which belong unto a saving knowledge of God are plainly set down, such as are the commandements, and the doctrine contained in the *Apostles Creed*, but now there are some things, which either relating to some particular customes of the *Jew* or *Gentile*, or unto the proper times wherein the Scriptures were severally writ, may be accounted hard, and not so plaine, as that we may *primâ fronte* and without much learning and study understand them; however, a Christian may be saved without any knowledge of these, though not so without the other: A man may go to Heaven

without knowing whether the Temple were built in such or such a yeare, or whether *Jeb* lived before *Moses* or after him, yet he cannot without understanding that he must believe in *Christ*, that he is a sinner, and the like: thus in other sciences there are some indemonstrable principles so plainly set downe, that no man can question them, and other things againe not altogether so essentiall, somewhat doubtfull and darkly proposed: but what may some one say, the *Mystery of the Trinity*, and the distinction of the persons in the *Godhead* are fundamentall doctrines, yet they are above the reach of reason, and therefore obscure: well 'tis true, these and the like Doctrines are obscure, but then as in *Geometry*, the same thing may be darke in its selfe, and yet by a demonstration plainly set down unto us in holy writ, and we ought to be contented with what that teacheth us concerning them, and however the very fundamentalls of our Religion are by some disputed of, and

and called into question, yet this proceedeth rather from the perversenesse and crookednesse of mens minds, then that they are obscure and doubtfully set down in Scripture, neither are they lesse to be received of us, because they question them, then the doctrine of motion is in *Phylosophy*, though a certaine foolish *Phylosopher* did once deny it : So the Apostle saith 2 *Pet.* 3. 16. that there are somethings in *Pauls Epistles* hard to be understood, which they that are unlearned and unstable wrest, as they doe also the other Scriptures unto their own destruction: marke here, there are somethings *δυσκόνητα*, not all things, but some things only, namely such as he speakes of here in this Chapter, the last judgement and destruction of the world, the time and manner of which things are not essentiall unto our salvation, & these things so hard, are wrested by unlearned unstable men, that is, men ignorant of the Scriptures and not ballanced with the Spirit, unholy, ungodly men, and therefore as the same sunne

may be light, and yet not appear so to be unto a blind man, the same booke plaine and legible, and yet unto dull and dimme eyes, darke and obscure ; in like manner , the same things , which are plaine and perspicuous unto the Godly Regenerate men, whose eyes God openeth, are for the most riddles and strange things unto the wicked, whom the God of this world hath blinded: we shall therefore in the Second place shew you, that they are more or lesse perspicuous according to the diversity of the subjects entertaining them; *objective*, and in themselves, they are perspicuous, but *subjective*, & in respect of men, they are more or lesse plaine, according as men are Regenerated or Unregenerated: the whole world you know is divided into the Regenerate and Unregenerate , this is an adequate division of all men , and therefore we shall

I. Enquire concerning the plainnesse and obscurity of the Scriptures in relation unto irre-
nerate

nerate men, and we shall lay downe this position, that noe wicked irregenerate man can *savingly* know the Scriptures; or thus, that the Scriptures though plaine in their natures, are yet darke and obscure unto irregenerate men: If our Gospell be hid, it is hid to them that are lost, 2 Cor. 4. 3. our Gospell saith the Apostle is as cleare as the light, but who can finde fault with the Sun if it gives not light to a blinde man, it is hid indeed, but then it is to those that are lost, to ungodly men; for the carnall man perceiveth not the things of the Spirit, 1 Cor. 2. the Scriptures all throughout contain in them Spirituall things, and therefore as a meer sensible Creature cannot judge of the discourses and reasonings of men, so neither can a meer rationall man perceive or discover the Mysteries of the Spirit, which is only proper to him, unto whom the Spirit revealeth them, as the Apostle elsewhere speakes; you know the Scripture is divided into the Law and the Gospell, and unregenerate men are said to be either
within

within or without the Church, now an unregenerate man, a *Gentile* without the Church, may have an historicall knowledge of the Law, for saith the *Apostle Rom. 2. 14.* they doe by nature the things contained in the Law, but as from an old eaten manuscript a man may gather a word or sentence or two, when yet notwithstanding he is not able to find out the drift, scope, and end of it, because through its ancientnesse it is much worne and perished; in like manner from those old reliques and vestiges of that *Law written in the hearts* of the *Gentiles* they might discover some things which pertained unto their duties towards God and their Neighbour, but then they could not know therefrom the intent of the Law, which was to drive them to a *Christ*, they could not know, that by it they could not be justified, they understood not the end and drift for which God wrote this Law in their hearts, & therefore though they might have an Historicall, yet they could not have a Saving knowledg thereof.

But

But Secondly, as for the Gospell, a Gentile cannot have either an Historicall or saving knowledge of it without it be preached unto them, or by some extraordinary way, unknown unto us, infused into them, for *Faith* (ordinarily, that is) commeth by hearing, and hearing by the word of God, therefore the opinion of those, who think that by the light of nature a man may come to the knowledge of Christ and the Gospell, is to be rejected.

2. Secondly a Christian unregenerate man within the Church, may have an Historicall contemplative knowledge of the Law and Gospell, but no saving particular knowledge of either, for it is to them foolishnesse, 1 Cor. 2. 14. and therefore it is rather a scandall and stumbling block unto them, then a light and saving rule, it cannot be expected therefore that the Scriptures should seem plain unto them, whose noysome lusts doe cast a mist and a cloud before their understandings, and whose interests and prejudices against the
the

the Doctrine of them, suffereth them not to behold their purity and cleer-
 nesse. Secondly, as ungodly irregenerate
 men cannot have any saving cleer
 knowledge of the Scriptures; so on
 the contrary, Godly regenerate Chri-
 stians may have it: for unto them
 alone it is given to know the secrets
 of the Kingdome of God, but to o-
 thers in parables, that when they see,
 they should not see, and when they
 heare, they should not understand;
 and so 2 Cor. 3 15, 16. tis said, untill
 this day *when Moses is read the vaile is
 laid over their hearts*, neverthelesse,
 when they shall turne unto the Lord,
 the Vaile shall be taken away. Re-
 pentance and the Spirit of regenera-
 tion doth remove all obstacles, and
 dispell all clouds, which doe other-
 wise overcast the understandings of
 naturall men; there are many things
 contained in Scripture, there is Histo-
 ry, which in generall, though not in
 each particular circumstance, may
 easily be understood of an enlightned
 Christian; there are Prophefyes
 which

which are either fulfilled, or yet remain unaccomplished, the former may be known by applications of their events, the latter we may assure ourselves will be fulfilled in their appointed time; there are commands of God, which being a declaration of his will, are plainly set down, and are as plainly understood, for a Christian knoweth the mind of Christ, and the will of his Father; there are also Promises, which being made only to Gods Children, are by them only rightly apprehended, *for unto Abraham and his seed were the Promises, Gal. 3. 16.* There are lastly, threatnings, which being denounced against sinne, are truly feared of those alone who make conscience of sinning; as a strange language doth seem very uncouth and ridiculous, unto such as have no experience of it, whereas on the contrary, it is most acceptable and delightfull to such as understand it: in like manner the language of the Scriptures, however they may seem strange and unreasonable to such as
are

are not acquainted with God and his holy Word, yet to a Regenerate Child of God, and such an one as rightly understands them, they are had in great esteeme, yea and are more precious to them then the hony or the hony-combe; now we delight only in such things which we understand, for *Knowledge according to Aristotle is the rest of the Soule*, a man may pore and reade all day in a Booke; yet if he understandeth not, 'twill minister little comfort, or pleasure to him, and therefore the Scriptures being so great a delight unto the Godly, for saith *David*, My delight is in thy Law, and my study therein day and night, it will follow, that they doe easily understand the meaning of them: but may some one say, doth not *David* pray also unto God to give him understanding that he may learne his Commandements, how are they then so easily to be understood of an Elect Child of God? wee answer, that in this place *Pf. 119. 73.* the Prophet doth not speake of an outward understanding

derstanding of the Scriptures, for who doubteth but that a Grammaticall and Historicall knowledge he had of them, but he prayeth for an inward assurance & comfort from them, which ought continually to be the prayers of every one who intends to benefit by the reading of them; besides, this availeth nothing, for we do not say that the Scriptures are plaine unto any, without Gods opening their eyes, and revealing unto them the mysteryes of his Kingdome: farther, a man may say, that if the Scriptures are thus plaine, as you will have them, what need you then take all this paines in expounding of them, to what purpose are so many Commentators and Interpreters of them? We answer, that though the Doctrine of Faith be plainely set down, yet other things there be in the Scripture, which may by reason of our ignorance stand in need of a Commentary, which also may be farther usefull for the more largely opening of the Scripture, which a new
be-

beginner cannot doe himself, thus the Elements of *Euclide* are very plaine & perspicuous in themselves, though notwithstanding for the benefit of young beginners they are farther illustrated and demonstrated by those that write on him: thus you see then, that the Scriptures are plain and perspicuous unto a Regenerate Child of God, though unto wicked Unregenerate men of the world they may appeare otherwise, not through any defect of light in themselves, but through the muddinesse and darknesse of their own minds; As unto diseased and ill affected eyes, all things even the brightest, will appeare of the same yellow colour that they at present are affected with.

But here I had almost forgotten to put you in mind of this caution: viz. That though all things necessary unto Salvation are plainly delivered in Scriptures, yet that they were not so plainly held forth unto the Faithfull under the old Testament, as now they are unto them under the New,

New, for we must know that the Promises under the Law were either Clouded and Muffled up in Types and Figures, or else couched and implied only in *Symbolicall* figurative expressions; for the Prophets of old did seldome speake but in figures: *Moses* his face did shine indeed, but then there was a vaile over it, and so *Christ* was represented indeed under the Old Testament, but through a cloud and mist, hence the *Apostle* saith that the mystery of the Gospel was kept secret since the world began, but now 'tis made manifest; that is, compare the times of the Old Testament with these of the New, & the Gospel then will seeme quite to have been hid, in comparison of what it is now, for so we must understand the words, it being the manner of the Scriptures, when they compare two things together, to expresse the lesse negatively: a knowledge of *Christ* without doubt the ancient Jewes had, for otherwise to what purpose would it be said *Joh. 8. 56. Your Father Abraham* rejoiced to see

my day, & he saw it, & was glad, & that they dranke of that Spirituall Rock that followed them, and that rock was Christ, 1 Cor. 10. 4. to what purpose also would those Promises & Propheys of Christ be, unles they had had some knowledg of him; a knowledg then they had of him, that's certain, but then this was only a confused, implicite knowledg of him, not a distinct, particular, & explicite one: as now we know in general, that great will be the Glory that shall be revealed upon us in Heaven, both in body and soule; but yet we cannot define certainly what kind of Glory it will be, untill this Mortall shall have put on Immortallity, this Corruption that Incorruption: so likewise the Patriarchs of old knew, and believed in a Christ to come, but then they did not explicately and distinctly understand his particular Offices, his Death and Resurrection, and the like, for of these the Apostle tels us for a time, because the fuller manifestation of these mysteryes was reserved untill the fullnesse of time, and the accomplishment

plishment of them; hence the Apostle saith, that the Fathers of Old did not actually receive the Promises, but saith he, they saw them afarre off, and were perswaded of them, and embraced them, *Heb. 11. 13.* As therefore a man by the help of a glasse may discover another at three or four miles distance, and not be able distinctly and throughly to view him all over; so likewise the faithfull in old time, thorough the glasse of the Law, did know Christs comming; but then they saw him afarre off, saith the Apostle, and therefore he could not circumstantially and cleerly be manifested unto them; and so likewise it is in relation unto the knowledge of the Trinity and other mysteries; they were darkely and emblematically, as I may so speake, hinted only in the Old Testament, God thus ordering it, that his people might more eagerly desire and pray for their fuller revelation. But now to us under the New Testament, these things are more cleerly layd open unto us, so

that we ought not to expect farther revelation of them, then what we have in the Word already; for saith the *Apostle*, *All the Promises of God in him are yea and Amen* : that is, they are thoroughly accomplish't and perfected in him, and therefore they must needs be more plain and evident unto us now, then they were unto the Fathers of old time : the *Old Testament* then, and the matter therein contained, was not altogether so perspicuous unto the faithfull before Christ, as now it is unto us after him : and this shall suffice for the second point, and so much also shall suffice briefly for the perspicuity of the Scriptures. We shall now speake something concerning the perfection of them ; as the Scriptures are perspicuous, so also they are most perfect, (that is) necessary to be known of us in relation both to our faith & manners: this is plain from the end of them here set down, Namely, that the man of God may be made perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good workes: from whence we may conclude

clude, that if the Minister of the Gospel, for he is the man of God, may out of the Scriptures furnish himselfe with all things necessary, both for his Salvation & his office, it will follow that they are fully perfect for instruction of all men, both in Doctrine and manners; this will farther appeare from Ps. 19. 7. *The Law of the Lord is perfect, converting the soule:* and Ps. 119. 96. *I have seen an end of all perfections, but thy commandment is exceeding large:* and so Luk. 16. 29. *Abraham* there sheweth in the Parable, that *Moses* and the Prophets were sufficient to keepe men from damnation, even the doctrine of the Old Testament contains in it all things necessary for mans Salvation: whoever denyeth the truth of this point, must of necessity say, that either first God did not perfectly and fully reveale his will to the Prophets and Apostles: which how absurd it is the Scriptures teach; for Job. 14. 26. 'tis said there, that the *spirit should teach them all things:* and Job. 16. 13. the Spi-

rit will guid you into all truth ;
 or else they must say, that the Pro-
 phets and Apostles did not set down
 the full and perfect substance of what
 was revealed unto them, which Saint
 Paul doth plainly seem to contra-
 dict, for *Act. 20. 27. I have not shunned*
(saith he) to declare unto you all the coun-
sell of God. Or else thirdly, he must be
 forced to say, that it seemed not good
 to the Spirit fully and perfectly to
 reveale the will of God , and so in
 writing to transmit it unto posterity,
 for thus the Papists say in defence of
 their traditions , that God indeed did
 reveale to the Prophets and Apostles
 his whole will, concerning our Sal-
 vation, but yet all was not written,
 but some things were communicated
 say they, *viva voce* unto the rest of the
 Church, which never were written,
 but still were derived unto posterity :
 but doth not this opinion plainly
 accuse the Scriptures of falsehood ,
 when it is said *Deut. 12. 32. Whatsoe-*
ver things I command you, observe to do it,
thou shalt not adde thereto nor diminish from
it,

it, & Gal. 1. 9. If any man Preach any other Gospell unto you then that ye have received, let him be accursed: which two texts being compared with that of Exod. 24. 4. Where 'tis said, that Moses wrote all the words of the Lord, and with that forementioned place of the Acts, where Paul saith, that he did not shun to declare unto them all the Counsell of God: these places I say, compared with one another, do evidently shew that all things necessary for Salvation were written; & that this written word alone ought to be the rule & canon of our faith: for since by them we attaine unto Eternall Life, we are made wise unto Salvation, since by them also the man of God is made perfect, and throughly furnished: Without controversy they containe in them all things necessary to be knowne of us, either in regard of our faith or manners, all things necessary I say, for otherwise many other things there might be traditionally conveyed unto the Church, such as are the perpetuall virginity of Mary, the

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names

names of *Jannes* and *Jambres* mentioned by *Paul* only, the Prophecy of *Enoch*, *Jude* 14. part of the Genealogy of *Christ*, *Luk.* 3. *Sathan* striving for *Moses* body, *Jude* 9. and other the like, which things they may be known or not known, without any prejudice to our Salvation; and being not doctrinall, may very well be received from hand to hand, and not mentioned in Scriptures: but how say the Papists, can ye know *Canonicall* bookes from *Apo-criphall* but by the tradition of the Church? We answer, that these may be distinguish't from the other, by that innate light, majesty, and truth that is in them; besides, though a new convert and beginner may first learne it from the Church, yet afterwards they know it upon grounds of Scripture; thus an ignorant man may be told of the Kings coine, but it is not that telling, but the Kings stampe that maketh it currant & good coyn. Again, for the maintenance of their *unwritten traditions* they urge that of the *2 Thes.* 2.15. *Therefore brethren stand fast, & hold the*

the tra'itions which ye have been taught, whether by word or our Epistle, then which saith *Whitaker*, *Nullum probabiliorem Papistæ locum inveniunt*: but unto this we answer, that they were the same things which *Paul* spoke and writ; so that the word *ἁρμόνιος* doth not signify a diverse doctrine from that which afterwards was written; and so also the particle *καὶ* is not alwayes a note of disjunction, but sometimes also of conjunction, as may appeare by comparing the Originall of the *1st Cor. 13. 8.* Besides this, it appeares that the Canon of the *new Testament* was not yet established: Yea saith the same *Whitaker* I affirme, that there was no book unlesse it were the Gospell of *Mathew* before the *Epistles to the Thessalonians*, wherefore though the *Apostle* did bid the *Thessalonians* hold fast that Doctrine or those Traditions, which he delivered unto them, yet they might very well be, & indeed according to substance were, set down in writing afterwards by the same *Apostle*; wherefore briefly to conclude this point, since

since these Scriptures are purposely written for our learning, and to beare witnesse of Christ, and to teach the way unto everlasting life, doubtlesse God will have no Doctrine received of us but what is in them, or consonant unto them; Traditions then however in point of ceremony, discipline, or other lesse substantiall matters, may be received, yet in points of faith and Doctrine they are in no wise to be obtruded upon us, or entertained by us. And thus much briefly for the Authority, Perspicuity, and Perfection of the Scriptures, concerning which, I might have spoken far more largely out of the *Fathers, Common-places, Catechists, and Polemicall Divines*, but intending brevity upon this point, I thought it more usefull for you and my selfe, wholly to examine the aforesaid points by Scripture, yet so, that I have given you a short glance and view of what they have said too. I shall only now shut up all with a use or two of what hath been now and heretofore spoken. Hence then

1.

1. We may learne the excellency 1. Use.
 of holy Scriptures above all other
 bookes and writings whatsover; we u-
 sually esteem of writings according
 to the eminency, and worth of their
 Authors; why now all Scripture is gi-
 ven by inspiration of God, and there-
 fore we should have them in so much
 account, by how much the nobler the
 contriver of them is, for as *David* said
 of *Goliath* his sword, there is none to
 that, 1 *Sam.* 21.9. So may we say of the
 Scriptures, there is none to them, the
 word of God is as a two edged sword
 dividing between the Joynts and the
 Marrow, so that what *Aristotle* said
 of the knowledge of the soul, that a
 little of it was better then a great deal
 of another science: We may also
 say of the knowledge of the holy
 Scriptures, a little knowledge of them
 will stand us in more steed, then all
 the vaine and perishing knowledge of
 prophane Writers: Could the time
 and shortnesse of our lives suffer us to
 swallow up and devoure whole *Libra-*
ries, as bigge as that of *Alexandria*, or
 this

this of our own: were it possible for us critically to go over and examine all those elaborated pieces of humane invention, could we perfectly Anatomize and trace nature in all her secret windings and operations; yet all this knowledge in it selfe, however it may place us above the clouds in mens opinions, may for all that be an occasion for God to hurle us deeper into Hell: But behold here a Book, that is able to make us wise unto Salvation, that directs and points us out a way unto eternall Life, yea which raiseth our minds up unto the contemplation of those mysteries, which the *Angels themselves did desire to peep into*; a Book that unlocks unto us the very Cabinet and secret Counsells of God himselfe, that revealeth and layeth open those mysteries of Godlinesse, those hidden things of God, which were before from all eternity clasped up in the bosome of the Almighty, that gives a landskip as 'twere, and map of Heavenly Joy, that out of darkenesse brings us into marvellous light;

light, that maketh us from Children of wrath to become heires of Heaven; from slaves freeborne; from Divells to become Saints. All other bookes, either by the teeth of time are worne out of memory, or in the ruines of Kingdomes receive their graves, but not one jot or tittle of this shall passe away, 'till all things be fulfilled. It hath been hitherto for some thousand yeares preserved amid'st the hatred of all the world against it, the persecutions of Tyrants, the malice and fury of Divells, and shall so unto the end of the world continue, though wicked men, Tyrants, and Divels should all combine their joynt forces to extinguish it, they may with more successe and easinesse goe about to blot the Sunne out of the Firmament, then to take this glorious Light from the Church & people of God: so that it was not without much reason that a holy Man once said, *That he had rather all the books beside in the world should be burnt, than that one leafe of Gods Word should be destroyed*: for doubtlesse
the

the least sentence therein comprised, is more worth then all the voluminous Offsprings and workes of mans braine. Wherefore

2. *Uſe.* 2. This should exhort every one of us, to a diligent reading and studying these holy Scriptures, search the Scriptures saith our Saviour, *ἐπευ-
ρατε*, the word implyes a kind of a hunting after them, or a narrow and painfull seeking into them, as men doe for Gold and Silver, and *let the word of God dwell in you*, that is, let it be as familiar unto you, as he that dwells under the same rooſe with you, and not only ſo, but dwell in you *richly*, let your minds be as throughly adorned with them, as a great mans house is with rich utenſills & hangings, and now let us examine our ſelves whether we do thus earneſtly ſearch after them, whether our hearts be thus furniſhed with them; are we not rather like thoſe Canonists of the Church of Rome, who ſome ſay will confirm their Law text, & this too taken upon truſt from
others

others, or like that *Bishop* mentioned in the booke of Martyrs, who thanked God he never knew what was meant by the *Old or New Testament*: doubtlesse there is no greater folly or madnesse in the world, if we rightly consider it, then to hanker after humane knowledge, and to be carelesse of divine understanding, greedily to devoure huskes, and yet to loath Manna, and like those Indians, to preferre toys and baubles before Gold & pretious treasure. But I need not (I hope) accuse any here of any such ignorance or neglect; all that I desire is, a more diligent studying of the word, and more conscionable practice of it; for reading & knowing without practice, will but aggravate our damnation: however, we ought to be stirred up to so necessary a duty as this is, especially in such times, wherein the meanest sort of people will upbraide our neglect of it, amongst many of whom, to our shame be it spoken, the Bible according to the letter is better known then ever *Aristotle* was amongst us, and will it not

not then much redound unto our disgrace, if the *Apron* should pose the *Gown* in those things which most concerne them, if poore illiterate Mechanicks should in the Doctrine of the Scripture confound a Learned Rabbi. My Brethren, you cannot be ignorant what prejudices some of the meaner sort of people have against us in this respect, and therefore besides the Salvation of our soules, which should be the main end of all, even politick respects should engage us to double our diligence in studying of the Holy Scriptures; for believe me, however easy they may seem to some, yet the full and clear understanding of them may very well take up our whole care and studies; there are Originalls to be known & consulted withall, antiquity to be searcht into and discusshed, severall places to be reconciled, various acceptations of words and phrases to be weighed, and compared together: there are besides these many things without the Scriptures very needfull, *Gram-*
mer

mer, to know the propriety of words :
Rhetorick, to understand the severall
Tropes and figures contained therein :
Logick, to deduce consequences,
 and artificially to open places of
 Scripture : and all three together,
 properly and distinctly to analyse,
 resolve, and open the particular chap-
 ters and Bookes thereof; which I
 conceive to be the nearest, and most
 compendious way for the understand-
 ing the drift and scope of Holy
 writ : now all these should be as so
 many severall tyes and engagements
 upon us continually to strike upon
 this anvil, night and day to study,
 read, and meditate upon the
 Holy Scriptures, especially for us
 who either actually are in, or else
 intend the calling of the Mi-
 nistry. But what may some of the
 younger sort here say, if the Scriptures
 be so hard as you make them, your
 exhortation will little prevaile with
 us, you will rather deterre us from
 reading them : to such I answer,
 that though many things in Scrip-

L

tures

tures be hard, yet the maine Doctrines thereof, which concerne our Salvation, are plainly set down, and as easily to be understood; besides, as the *Oratour* notes of the Elements of Sciences, and Sciences themselves, that they seem hard and difficult only to the first undertakers of them: so may we say of the Holy Scriptures, their seeming difficulties will easily be conquered, and made unto those that familiarly use & read them, as a strange language by use and custome becomes easy and familiar; there are many things indeed in *holy writ* foulded up in obscurity, but this is to make us more earnestly pray unto God to open our eyes, that we may behold the wondrous things of his Law: this is to tame the pride and arrogance of our nature, which is apt to spurne and undervalue things obvious, this is to enflame and raise up a generous holy minde unto a continuall reading and studying of them; for as we count that man most valiant, who will venture upon hard and difficult enterprises,

Prizes, in like manner may we esteem that man most holy and best minded, who will (as I may so speake) dare to be pious, and conquer all the seeming difficulties of the Holy Scriptures with his desire to know them, and his industry to find them out; wherefore as the voice once said unto *Austin*, so let me say unto you all, *tollite, legite*, take up the word, read it; perhaps you may find something therein that may dampe and frighten your wild lusts, as they say that *holy Father* was presently converted upon the reading of that text *Rom. 13. 12.* *The night is farre spent, the day is at hand, let us therefore cast off the workes of darknesse, and put on the armour of light: tollite, legite*, perhaps you may finde there something that may strike into your soules an holy amazement and sacred horroure for your sins past, as *Junius* saith of himselfe, that he was stricken with amazement by a divine kind of Authority, and so turned from his *Atheisme* upon the reading of the 1 Chapter of *John*: Againe, *tollite, legite*, perhaps you saw

L 2

light

light through some temptations answered, some grievances of Conscience pacified upon thy diligent observance of his word, some judgement denounced against thy sinnes, some good thing or other, that may either comfort thee, or encourage thee in thy farther reading of them: *tollite, legite.* take it up and read it, but read it with reverence, it is the Word of God, read it with discretion and judgement, by marking the connexion of them, by comparing one place with another, and by examining all things according to the Analogy of Faith, and by applying that which thou readest unto thy own particular use and estate: read it lastly with method and order, distinctly going over that Booke which thou undertakest, least thou be *always learning and never come to the knowledge of the truth.* Oh but read it I doe, perhaps two Chapters a day, besides I heare it read twice a day in this very place, but yet I can find no Spirituall comfort from it, it doth not
move

move me for all that, what shall I doe then to have comfort from it? The answering of this case will be very proper for us; for many of us I doubt not doe heare and read the word, but then I feare we are as little moved with it as the benches we sit upon, or the ground we tread on; but let such a man consider his fearfull estate, who can thus heare judgements denounced and yet not be shaken, mercies promised and yet not be melted; let him consider what a fearfull thing it is to heare or read God speaking, and he to have his mind another way, for God to thunder out in his Word, and yet he to sleep all the while securely in his sinne: how can he expect Heaven who is thus carelesse of the instrument of his Salvation? doubtlesse that God who commanded the Jewes in the 6. Deut. 8. *To bind his Laws for a signe upon their hands, and that they should be as frontlets between their eyes, and that they should write them upon the posts and gates of their houses,* must needs be mightily provoked at

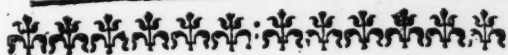
their contempt, who will not give his word any admission into their hearts or eares, wherefore if such men doe desire to be moved, or to receive any comfort from their reading or hearing the word,

1. They must continually pray unto God to take from them their heart of stone, and give unto them an heart of flesh, bestow upon them likewise the Spirit of wisdom and revelation of the knowledge of him that the eyes of their understanding being enlightned, they may know what is the hope of their calling, Ephes. 1. 16, 17.

2. They must examine themselves what worldly cares doe distract their minds, what prejudices and temptations doe enter into their hearts at the reading of the Word, which are like the thornes (in the parable) choaking the good seed of the Word.

3. They must seriously meditate upon the Word, read, and endeavour to remember it, for as meat doth that man little good, whose stomacke hath not a retentive faculty in it to retaine

retaine and digest it, in like manner the Word of God being not chewed upon (as 'twere) by meditation, and well remembred, doth become uselesse and unprofitable to us; so then we must not only read the Word, but we must practice it also, we must lay it up in our hearts, and bring forth the fruits of it in a holy and Godly Conversation. I might here farther enlarge upon this point, and confirme my exhortation of reading the holy Scriptures from their plainnesse and perfection, their subject and matter of them altogether divine, from their end, the Glory of God and mans Salvation, from their principall Author, GOD, and from many other Arguments, but I shall crave leave here abruptly to break off and conclude.



2 Tim. 3. 16, 17.

*All Scripture is given
by inspiration, and is
profitable for Doctrine,
for Reproofe, for Cor-
rection, for Instruction
in Righteousness: that
the man of God may be
perfect, throughly fur-
nished unto all good
workes.*



Concerning the Booke of
Nature and the Creatures we
have already spoken, we
are to speake Concerning
the Booke of the Scriptures ; by the two
former

former I told you we had only a confused ineffectuall knowledge of God, by this latter we have a more cleare, distinct and saving knowledge of him; should we have been left only to the light of nature within us, and the conduct of the Creatures without us, we might have eternally groped in darknesse, and never have come unto Salvation, for though these may direct us unto a God, yet they do not properly unto a Christ, nature can never throughly discover the will of God, and the right meanes unto Salvation, and though God be delineated and drawn out (as 'twere) in his Creatures, yet it is but in darke colours, seen he may be, and understood in them, but never exactly worshipped and served through them, there must be then some higher Principle and fountaine, from whence we may draw the knowledge of his will, his grace, and goodnesse towards mankind, his love unto us from all Eternity in designing his Sonne to dye for us, and to reveale unto us all those high mysteries

steries of Religion, which otherwise
 nature can never reach unto ; now
 that which doth these things must
 needs be the Word of God, which in-
 structing heretofore the old *Patriarchs*,
 either by Oracles or Vision, was at
 length by *Moses* proclaimed unto the
 Church, and set down in writing, that
 so all might plainly see who he was,
 what kind of worship he did approve
 of, and by what meanes he would
 bring them unto Heaven, so that as
 Christ said unto the woman of
Samaria, *Ioh. 4.22.* That both shee and
 her nation worshipped they knew not what,
 we say likewise of the *Gentiles*, they
 worshiped they knew not what God,
 or the true one in a false manner, for
 before Christs time Gods words be-
 ing confined & closetted within the
 Church of the *Jewes*, no wonder that
 the *Gentiles* without the pale became
 vaine in their imaginations, and wor-
 shiped the Creature more then the
 Creator ; and now after Christ, ma-
 ny Nations either through malice re-
 jecting the Scriptures, or through
 negligence

negligence being ignorant of them ; no wonder that they are given up to worship the Host of Heaven, and to follow after Idolls, and lying vanities : for as old and dimme eyes, though they may behold a faire volume, yet they cannot speak or read perhaps two words together without the help of spectacles, or some other glasse ; in like manner, though a purblind naturall man, a Gentile, may see God in the large volume of his creatures, yet without the light and helpe of holy Scriptures he can never discover his will, and the true manner wherein he will be worshiped ; the Scriptures alone are the Canon and Rule unto which we must square our selves in the service of God, the *principium cognoscendi*, that instrument and ladder, whereby we may climbe up into Heaven, and have a more intimate and cleere knowledge of God, then possibly we can attaine unto, either by the light of nature, or conduct of the Creatures. Wherefore leaving the two former
Bookes

Bookes of *Nature* and the *Creatures*;
 we must enter now into a higher
 forme (as it were,) and learne the
 booke of the *Scriptures*; it shall be my
 taske therefore at present to open un-
 to you the Doctrine of the Holy
 Scriptures out of these words, in pro-
 secution of which, as of all other
 heads ensuing, I shall as I have told
 you endeavour to couch my matter
 in as short a roome as I can, that so I
 may the more speedily goe over the
 summe and substance of Christian
 Religion, which is the intent of this
 exercise, and then I shall with all
 plainnesse, perspicuity, and method
 both open and apply the Doctrine,
 familiarly illustrating those things
 that are knotty and hard, without
 rambling and fetching in of things
 wick will not consist with my inten-
 ded brevity and method: As for the
 Doctrine of the holy Scriptures,
 which being a beaten path, I shall
 with lesse paines goe over. These
 words as I conceive are the most per-
 tinent whereon I may build it, which
 are

are brought in as an argument to strengthen and confirme the Doctrine which *Timothy* had suckt in even from his youth, and received from *Paul*, for he shewing (in the beginning of this Chapter) the dangers of the latter times, and the errours of evill men and seducers, doth give his Sonne *Timothy* an antidote aginst their poyson, exhorting him in the 14. verse, to continue in the Doctrine which he had received: the times indeed are very evill, errours very rise, persecutions every where offered to the professors of the Gospell, but (saith he) continue thou in the things which thou hast learned &c. this exhortation he seems to presse by severall arguments, thou must continue in sound Doctrine.

1. Because thou hast learnt it, it was to that purpose deposited with thee, and instilled into thee, that thou mightest continue in it.

2. Because thou hast been assured of it, and therefore 'twould argue want of Judgement and folly in thee to fall from it, and because thou knowest

est of whom thou hast learn'd it, not from any impostor or seducer, but from a *Paul*, an *Aposile* acted by the Spirit, & teaching nothing but what he hath from Christ and the Holy Ghost, and therefore whose authority ought to binde thee to persevere in the things thou hast learned.

3. O *Timothy* thou must continue in those things thou hast learned, because from a child thou hast known the holy Scriptures, v. 15. thou hast been so long versed in the sacred truth, so long learnt and received it, that now it would be a most base thing for thee to recede from it; read it thou hast from thy Child hood, and therefore hold it fast thou shouldest in thy riper yeares; this argument he backs on

4. From the perfection and profitable effect of the Sacred Scriptures, they are able to make thee wise unto Salvation through faith which is in Christ *Jesus*, thou must therefore continue in the Doctrine and Word of God, because if thou believest in that, 'tis able to instruct thee unto Heaven,
and

and eternall Salvation, these arguments he puts down in the 14, & 15. verses, now he goes on in these words read unto you to perswade him to persevere in the faith and Doctrin of the Scriptures, for saith he, *all Scripture is given by inspiration of God*, the Authority therefore of it should bind thee to continue in the maintenance of it; and *'tis profitable for Doctrin, for Reproofe, for Correction, for instruction in righteousness*, and therefore the great profit of it in instructing thee in all things, which tend to Religion or well living, and also its perspicuity in laying down all manner of things plainly, which make either for Doctrin, or for decission of controversies or for regulating mens manners, either in publicke or private; and then in the 17. verse, the Apostle confirms his exhortation from the end of the Holy Scriptures, which is, that *the man of God may be perfect, &c.* it is perfect in it self, and therefore it doth make men perfect, and thoroughly instructed unto all good works: since then saith Paul the Doctrin

doctrine which thou hast learnt hath so
 noble an Author of it as God, hath so
 profitable an use as to make men *wise*
unto Salvation, to instruct, to reprove, to
correct, and since it hath so admirable
 perfection in it, as to make the man
 of God perfect, & throughly furnished
unto all good workes, good reason then
 my sonne *Timothy,* that be the times
 what they will, be errors never so
 plausibly entertained, and truth never
 so violently opposed, that thou not-
 withstanding shouldest continue in
 the things which thou hast lear-
 ned, in the Doctrine of the Scriptures
 which thou hast received: And this is
 the drift of the Apostle in this Chap-
 ter. The well understanding of which,
 together with the words read unto
 you, will much conduce to the open-
 ing of this my present Doctrine of
 the Scriptures: I shall therefore ex-
 pound the words themselves more
 distinctly, and in the opening of them
 briefly touch upon some things,
 which I cannot handle at large, and
 then I shall come to what I mainly
 M intend,

intend : well then here is the subject spoken of, the *Scripture*, set forth by its Author, *GOD*, by its use, 'tis profitable for *Doctrine &c.* by its end, which is, that the man of God may be perfect &c. All *Scripture* *ᾠὰν γραφὴν* all writing, for so the Word of God is called *Scripture* by way of eminency, it is the chiefest of al other writings which are so far accounted good or bad as they come neere to, or decline from this : but here saith *Beza*, when the Apostle saith *all Scripture*, we must take heed least we understand any besides that which we call *Canonicall*, (that is) such bookes, which by reason of their Antiquity, their argument, and divine doctrine they treat of, their efficacious and lively manner and method of their discourses, are the Canon, yea rule and touchstone, by which all *Doctrines* and *Writings* whatever are to be tryed ; for there are other Books which either because the names of their *Authors* were unknown to the *Prophets* and *Apostles* are called *Apocryphall* or hidden, which though otherwise

wise containing many usefull & profitable instructions, are yet notwithstanding to be hid and laid aside, when any truth comes to be tryed. And therefore when our Apostle saith that *all Scripture is given by inspiration of God*, we must exclude those *Apocryphall Bookes*, for since they are neither written in the Hebrew tongue, nor by any Prophet, of which *Malachy* was the last, nor taken notice of by Christ and his Apostles, since also they containe many things absurd and contrary one to another, we have reason to suspect that they were never given by inspiration of God: *ωσπου γενηι δεβωρευς & βει* all Scripture is inspired of God, or as the word implyes *breathed from God*; those notions, words, and phrases, which may every where occurre in holy Writ, were dictated unto the pen-men thereof by the Holy Ghost himselfe, so that Prophecy came not of old time by the will of men, but holy men of God spake as they were moved, 2 Pet. 1. 21. wherefore we read not, thus saith

Jeremiah, or thus saith *Isaiah*; but thus saith the Lord, and the mouth of the Lord hath spoken it: but what may some say, is all that is contained in the Scripture the Word of God? Why then those impostures and calumnies of Sathan set down in the 3. of *Gen.* and 4. of *Matthew*; those erroneous sayings of *Jobs* Wife unto him, to curse God and dye, with the like, are the Word of God. We answer, that these and the like sayings only historically set down, being abstractedly in themselves considered, are not from God; but then consider the truth of them, and the end for which they are set down, so they are: As we may say, that *Tacitus* is the Author of that whole Booke, though many things in it are supposed to be spoken from other men; and as the same wax, though of litte worth in it selfe, yet sealed and put in a bond may be of great concernement and value, in like manner those speeches of Heathen Authors cited by the Holy Ghost, as that of *Aralus* *Act.* 17. 28. and that of *Epime-*
nides

nides Titus 1. 12. though of little worth, as they came from such men, yet being inserted into holy writ receive divine Authority, and may be of great moment unto our Salvation; many things there be also in Scripture, which *quoad præceptum* may have greater Authority then other, but *ratione Authoris* are equall. As the Commandements of the first Table are more severely enjoyned then those of the second, yet the same God writ them both; thus gold may be more precious then gold in weight and shape, though not in purity: it remains then, that *all Scripture* some way or other is given by inspiration of God, and therefore it is all one to say, the Scripture saith, and God saith, as may farther appeare from the 9. of the Romans 25. verse. and Gal. 4 30. *All Scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable*: many are the commodities of the written Word, for besides that it is a standing rule, whereby we may try all other Doctrines, as the *Bareans* tryed Pauls Do-

ctrine by searching the Scriptures, whether those things were so, *Act. 17. 11.* and therefore as those that carry false and Adulterate coine about them cannot endure to heare of a touchstone, so likewise those cheates in Religion, the *Papists*, will not suffer the Scriptures to be read, least thereby their impostures should be laid open, and their folly appeare unto all men : besides, this commodity I say, the Apostle saith, that 'tis profitable,

1. For Instruction, *αὐτὴ διδασκαλίαν*, for the discovering (that is) of such things unto us, which without it we could never have known; there are Mysteries of Godlinesse, and abscondite hidden things of God, which humane reason can never unvaile or fathome; that an infinite God should be cloystered up in a Virgins wombe, that he should leave Heaven and lye in a Manger for the Redemption of his enemies, and the like, is above the reach and disquisition of a naturall understanding, and therefore we must of necessity be farther enlightned by
the

the Word of God before we attaine unto the knowledge of these things ; it is profitable also for instruction of us in the fall & restauration of man, in the Sacraments, yea in all things necessary unto Salvation; it instructeth and teacheth us how wretched we are by nature, how happy by Grace, how to beat downe principalities and powers, how to want, and how to abound, how finally to be wise unto Salvation :

2. 'Tis profitable faith he *οὐκ ἐστιν ἁπλοῦς* for reproofe, there is no errour so plausibly broached, so strongly fortified and maintained by humane reason, but may be beat down and vanquish't by Scripture, and therefore saith the Apostle *He that is Spirituall judgeth all things, lyet he himselfe is judged of no man*, 1 Cor. 2 18. He that is rightly informed in the holy Scriptures, he to whom the Spirit hath revealed the will of God, and who knoweth the minde of Christ, may without the assistance of forraine traditions, testimonies of the Fathers, and the

like, not only know, but also confute such errours as are repugnant unto sound Doctrine and the Analogy of Faith: the Word of God is called a *light* : *Pfal. 119-105.* and therefore as by light only we know what darknesse is, so by the same word may we understand what is erroneous and false in religion : As we say, that a right thing is a sufficient judge of its own straitnesse and the crookednesse of another body : so that there is an *elenctical* power (as I may so speak) in the very Scriptures themselves, to stop the mouthes of gainfayers, and to quash & put to silence the impious opinions and errors of ungodly men.

3. *'Tis profitable for correction, καὶ ἐπὶ τὴν ἐπεὶ διορθωσιν*, for the reformation (that is) for an amendment of all things amisse, either in life or manners; there is not the least deviation from the Law of God, either in thought, word, or deed, but it doth espye and correct. A man can never fine soe closely but it will find him out for the Word of God tryeth the reins & the heart,

heart, it is a two edged sword, dividing betwixt the joynts & the marrow, & is a discoverer of the thoughts and intents of the heart, Heb. 4. 12. As it doth teach what things are right, so it doth correct & amend what things are out of order.

4 'Tis profitable for instruction *αποδιδεικνυ*, *instruant Patriarchæ etiam errantes*. The title of the 32. Psalme is a Psalme of instruction, the word seemes to me to imply the great profit of the Scriptures, even for the instruction of Children and young men: so farre was our Apostle from forbidding any of what sort soever the reading of the Scriptures, that he makes it one of the main ends and uses of the written Word to instruct all men, even unto Children: hence it is that v. 15. the Apostle approves in Timothy, that from a Child he had read the Scriptures: and I am verily perswaded that the Romanists withhold the reading of Scriptures from the people more out of a point of policy, then Religion, or ground they have for it out of the Word it selfe; for it seemes altogether

gether repugnant, first, to the Commands of God, who enjoyned *Moses* to read the *Law* before all *Israel*, Men, Children, and strangers within thy gate without any distinction, *Deut.* 31. 12. And who bids us search the *Scriptures*, *Joh.* 5. 39? and who commands that the *Word* of God should dwell in us richly and abundantly? Had not laymen and ordinary people soules to be saved, as well as the greater *Cardinalls* and *Priests*, there were some reason that these precious things should not be cast unto such doggs, these Jewells to such Swine, but they expecting life from the same *Christ* as greater *Schollars*, why should they not with them have the same meanes to obtaine it? if the command of God lye thus indefinitely upon all men, why should they be debarred from obeying that command? Secondly 'tis repugnant to the very designe of God in revealing his will in the *Holy Scriptures*, for whatsoever things were written aforetime were written for our learning, that we through patience and comfort of the *Scriptures* might have

have hope, *Rom. 15. 4.* why was the word written, but that we might have hope? and shall not a lay-man have hope of Salvation? will you exclude the common people from the hope of Heaven? if not, why then shall they not have this hope through patience and comfort of the Scriptures? againe, *Ephes. 6. 12. 17.* the Apostle there shewing how that we wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities and powers, &c. bids them therefore take to themselves the Helmet of Salvation, & the Sword of the Spirit, which is the Word of God: and now ought not poore ignorant soules thus to wrestle, thus to fight against powers, against the rulers of the darkenesse of this world, against Spirituall wickednesse in high places? why then shall they not have this comfort? Why should they not be armed with that sword of the Spirit, the Word of God? When a Prince setteth forth a Proclamation 'tis penned in a language that all his Subjects may understand it, and doubtlesse 'tis the intent and end of God in proclaiming his Will and
Word

Word unto mankind, that all his People should read and understand what wonderful things he there revealeth for their Salvation; for otherwise what a vaine unprofitable thing would it be to kindle a light meerly to put it under a bushell, to bestow a rich treasure upon us (for so the Word is called) to be hid and clasped in a box: to give us a rule whereunto we should square our lives, even his Holy Word, only that it should be shut up and cabined in an unknown language: it is in my judgement the highest piece of injustice in the *Church of Rome* thus to deprive the people of the bread of life, and instead thereof to obtrude upon them their own hypocriticall leaven, their *sopperyes* and *traditions*; to obstruct and seale up the fountaine, and then to feed them with the muddy streames of their own inventions; yea indeed to damne mens souls meerly out of a divelish kind of policy to secure their own state and interest: but say they, there is no such necessity certainly for the
common

Common peoples reading the Scriptures, when as in the times of the old Testament there were many Believers, as *Job* & his friends, who yet living not among the *Jews*, to who then only were committed the *Oracles of God*, were destitute of the *holy Scriptures*: we answer, that as for *Job* & his friends they lived by computation of the best divines before the Law and the written Word; whereas had they lived after it they had been bound to have the Scripture after it was delivered; besides, what if it be granted that some believers there were under the Old Testament, who *de facto* had not the Scriptures, must it therefore now *de jure* be true, that the commonalty ought not to have them? under the Old Testament perhaps God might by vision, or some other extraordinary way, reveale his will unto some of the *Gentiles*, as unto *Job* & others before their Conversion, which ways being not now to be expected, reason it is that all People should now fetch their knowledge of God from the Scriptures. Again, they

they object that *Paul* writ not his Epistle unto the *Romans* in Latine, which was their vulgar tongue, but in Greek, therefore to put the Scriptures in a vulgar tongue is not needfull: we answer, that the reason of this was, that those sacred monuments of *Paul* being to instruct all people besides the *Romans*, the Spirit thought it most convenient to write it in such a language which might most universally be understood, now that the greek was then most known unto all Nations appears not only out of prophane Authors, but also out of the Scriptures themselves: as from *Rom. I. 16.* and other places, where the Apostle under the name of *Greeke* comprehends all the Gentiles: but we must not here stand too long upon these things; it remaines that since the Scripture is profitable for instruction in Righteousnesse, good reason therefore it is, that all people being thus to be instructed should read the holy Scriptures, whose end it is (as the Apostle goes on) that the man of God may be perfect

perfect and thoroughly furnished unto all good works, ὁ τὸ θεῶν ἀνδρῶν, i. e. by comparing the 1 Tim. 6.11. with this, the Minister or interpreter of God, such as Timothy was himselfe, that he might be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good workes: that he namely, who is of greatest concernement, and knowledge in the Church, may out of the Scriptures furnish himselfe with the knowledge of such duties, which belong unto God and his neighbour, there is no kind of good worke or duty, which can be thought upon, but the Scripture doth prescribe and prepare us unto: and this is the meaning of the words, on which I have been the longer, because by them I have taken occasion to resolve you of such doubts, which for brevity sake I cannot at large and distinctly handle: from the words themselves you may note these three common observations.

1. That the Scriptures are of divine authority, for they are inspired of God.

2.

2. That they are most perspicuous, and in the main most easily to be understood: for otherwise how could they be *profitable for our instruction in righteousness*.

3. That they are most perfect: for if the Minister himselfe can draw out of them all things necessary unto his duty, it will follow doubtlesse that they containe all things necessary for our Salvation, and that they are most perfect.

1. Then we shall shew, that the Scriptures are of Divine authority: what these Scriptures are none here I suppose can be ignorant of, for you must needs conclude from what hath been spoken, that they are the Word of God, or holy bookes written by the inspiration of God, *to make us wise unto salvation*; so that in the very frontispeice (as 'twere) of the definition you may discover from whence they proceed; God is the Authour of them that is certaine, and 'twere as absurd for a Christian to deny this, as for any man to deny that beames and
rayes

rayes proceed from the Sunne, and
 therefore he that calls into question,
 or denys that the Scriptures are the
Word of God, is as unworthy the name
 of a Christian, as he is of a *Phylosopher*
 or a *Metaphysitian*, that disallowes of a
naturall body or entity, because these are
 things which are necessary to be pre-
 supposed of him: should all the men
 of the world unanimously conspire
 to deny that the Scriptures are the
 Word of God, yet are they no lesse
 divine and authenticall then the
 Sunne would be light, if all men o-
 therwise were blinded: let *Turkes* and
Pagans say what they will, yet the
 Scriptures will be still Gods word,
 and there are such sufficient reasons
 for to prove it, that he that is not
 either wilfully blinded or malici-
 ously bent must needs confesse the
 same; for that they are from God,
 and so in themselves of divine Autho-
 rity, sundry reasons may be given,
 we shall only for brevity sake name
 three or foure: For besides that they
 doe most cleerly reveale unto us the

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nature

nature and workes of God, as the three Persons in the Trinity, the mystery of the regeneration, and the like things, altogether above the reach and contrivance of man; besides the impartialnesse and candour of the Pen-men of them, for so *Moses* setteth down the incest of his Parents, of whom he was begotten, *Ex. 6.2.* and his own disobedience, *Numb. 11.11.* *Jonah* his murmering, and *Jeremiab* his fretting, which undoubtedly shews that they were not biassed with any carnall respects, but altogether overruled and inspired by an higher Spirit; besides also the quality & condition of the Pen-men, *Amos* an herdsman, *Mathew* a publican, the *Apostles* many of them fishermen, which evidently shew that there was some higher power which did instill into them that profoundnesse of wisdom, which all the art and *Phylosophy* in the world can never reach unto: Adde to these the consent and holy conspiracy (as 'twere) between all their writings, notwithstanding the
great

great difference of times they wrote in, the remoteness of places, and the diversity of matters whereof they have written; so incredible and divine is their *mutuall harmony*, that you would rather think one man writ them with divers pens, then that divers men writ them by one Spirit; besides these and sundry other reasons, I say, which may sufficiently declare who is the principall Authour of this holy writ, another great argument & testimony of their originall is, *first*, the truth and events of Scripture Prophesies; Can any man, Angel, or created being foretell future contingent events, can they tell the very *name* of a man, and the time of his birth a hundred yeares before hand, as the Spirit by *Esay* did concerning *Cyrus*? and in the *1* of the *Kings* *13*. concerning a *Josias* by name above 300 yeares say *Annalist's* before he was borne? could ever any of the cheating Oracles of the Heathens, or any counterfeited *Sybill* tell of a *Messias* to be borne 4000 yeares after, & then to come

to passe just as 'twas foretold, as it did according to the promise made to *Adam, Gen. 3. 15.* we our selves of this Nation are living examples of the truth of holy predictions & succeeding events, the Scriptures many thousand yeares ago did foretell the calling of the Gentiles, *for in him say they shall the Gentiles trust, and all the ends of the earth shall see the Salvation of God, and behold the Prophesey accomplished in our selves :* we who heretofore sate in darknesse and the shaddow of death, doe now lye under glorious light, who before were not a people, but are now a people; 'twere endlesse to relate unto you all the Propheseys which were exactly accomplish't according to the times, places, and circumstances foretold:

2. But secondly, the miracles that were wrought by, and did accompany the teachers and writers of the Word, may sufficiently confirme our faith in the authority of the Scriptures themselves, unlesse we are worse then the *Magicians*, who upon the Miracle

racle of lice could cry out *this is the finger of God*, *Exod. 8. 19.* but how may we know that the Miracles we read in the Gospels are true, since by some the Gospel it self is doubted of? Answer, that were they not true they would have either been refuted or rejected by the men of those dayes, but so farre were they then from that (as a learned man notes) that *Josephus* a Jew, an enemy to the Christian truth, did acknowledge Christ to be the worker of many miracles.

A 3^d main argument of the *Divinity* of the Scriptures, may be that admirable force and power which they have upon the minds and hearts of men, which believe in them, sometimes to humble and cast down, sometimes to comfort and raise up the Spirits, what vigour doth it put into a man enabling him to resist even his own desires, to fight against his own flesh and blood, to suffer and beare all afflictions and tribulations for Christ his sake : shew me any humane eloquence that can alter and change

the very natures of men, that can over-awe, keep under hatches the rebellions, mutinies, and motions of the flesh, that can put a *Felix* into a trembling, a stubborn *Pharaoh* into a relenting, that can give light unto the simple, stop the mouth of gain-sayers, that can divide between the heart and the world, between a mans selfe and his selfe; humane eloquence that can only move and persuade, this force and command; it comes with an *אִתּוֹ הַקֹּדֶשׁ*, thus saith the Lord, and therefore exacts obedience. Adde to all these the testimonies of all times concerning the Scriptures, their *Antiquity*, *Moses* being borne before the very Gods of the Heathens, the latest of the *Prophets* matching the antientest of the *Philosophers*; adde also their constant preservation and continuance even till now, maugre all the fury and rage of *Tyrants*, the malice of *Divells* and divelish men, who have done, and doe still oppose these holy writings; adde finally unto all these, the testimonies of an army
of

of *Martyrs*, maintaining even to death the truth of the Scriptures; men of all sorts, ignorant, who though they could not dispute, could yet dye for the truth, wise, rich, poore, of all ages and sexes, women, children, aged folkes, enduring all manner of torments, with all patience and constancy for the maintenance of Gods Word, and the truthes therein contained; these with many other reasons may sufficiently demonstrate, that God alone is the *Author* of the Scriptures: but now as there may be many witnesses unto a bond, and yet still all be of little moment, unlesse the scale be put on too, in like manner all these witnesses and arguments here produced will be of little concernment unto our Salvation, unlesse they be sealed with the Spirit of promise, as the Apostle speakes *Ephes. 1. 13.* we may be convicted by the foregoing arguments that God is the Authour of the Holy Scriptures, but yet they can never se worke faith nor a full assurance of them, unlesse the Spirit which

beareth witnesse unto our Spirits,
 jointly cooperates and opens our eyes
 more fully to see this light : for as
Hagar, Gen. 21. 19. could not see the
 fountain that was neer her untill God
 had opened her eyes, so neither can
 we perfectly discern or savingly
 know the holy Scriptures untill the
 Holy Ghost doth open our eyes, as
David speakes, to behold the marvellous
things of the Law : we have therefore
 occasion here to enquire, how it may
 appeare unto us that the Scriptures
 are the Word of God, or how a man
 may savingly and truely know that
 the Scriptures are the Word of God
 and of divine authority ? the *Papist*
 they say that the reason why they
 believe the Scriptures are the Word
 of God, is because the Church
 saith so, we say that the reason
 why we believe them so to be,
 is because they are in themselves
 worthy of all beliefe, and because
 the Spirit of God witnesseth and
 sealeth unto our Spirits that they
 are the Word, of God ; now whe-
 her

ther the witnesse of men, or the witnesse of God be greater, judge ye: however it hath been a point very much controverted and canvassed on both sides, therefore I shall endeavour briefly and cleerly to state it, and to make you understand the absurdity and vanity of their position. Our *thesis*, on which I shall ground my Discourse, shall be this, namely that the Authority of the Scriptures *in esse cognito* and *quoad nos* doth not so depend on the Church as on their own innate light, and testimony of the Spirit within us: the termes of this Thesis being explained you will easily understand the whole matter; I say then, that the Authority of the Scriptures *in esse cognito*, and *quoad nos*, for though some of the *Papists* have been so impudent as to affirme, that the Scriptures have no more divine authority in them without the Testimony of the Church, then *Æsops Fables* or *Ovid's Metamorphosis* hath, yet some of the moderne and ingenuous of them doe acknowledge, that
in

in themselves indeed they are of divine authority, yet this cannot (say they) otherwise appeare unto us then by the testimony of the Church: we say then, that they may otherwise appeare unto us to be Gods Word then by the church, as we may know that light is light, and gold is gold by their owne qualities and lustre, without any mans telling of us that they are so; besides, if they are as they confesse of divine authority in themselves, by what Law then can their Church usurpe authority over them, unlesse (as needs it must come to passe) they account the authority of their Church above that of God, and so become no lesse blasphemers then absurd.

2. I say, that the authority of the Scriptures in *esse cognito* and *quoad nos*, doth not so much depend upon the Church, as on their own innate light, and testimony of the Spirit within us; doth not *so much* I say, for I doe not deny but that the Church is a great confirmer of the truth and divinity of

of the Scriptures , and that it doth execute many good offices toward them. As

First, it is a witnesse unto them, and a keeper and preserver of them; but now will any one be so absurd to say, that the records or writings of a King doe receive authority from their Notary or Register, because he keeps them?

Secondly, the Church may discern and judge between true and false supposititious Scriptures, and that by examining them according to the originall *Canon* and *platforme of Moses* his Law, *for my sheep saith our Saviour John 10. beare my voyce*, and so can distinguish it from another; but now as a Goldsmith may by his weights and touchstone distinguish Gold from Copper, & yet not be said to make the Gold, yea or to make it so unto us, but only to make us the more easily believe that Gold it is, in like manner the Church in its examining & distinguishing of Scriptures can be only said to confirm unto us the divinity of them,
not

not in any wise, either in themselves or unto us, to make them divine.

The third thing that the Church doth, is to preach and divulge the Scriptures; but now as we believe and obey the Proclamation of a King, not because such an one proclaimeth it, but for it selfe, so likewise we obey and believe the Scriptures not for the Church, but its own sake.

Fourthly, the Church doth expound and interpret Scriptures; but now as a faithfull Interpreter of an Embassadour doth not either adde or take from the true sence and meaning of him, so likewise neither doth or ought the true Church to adde or diminish any thing of Holy Writ, and therefore much lesse hath it power to make it in any wise of any greater price or value then really it is in it selfe, and this is all the true power that the Church can challenge in relation unto the holy Scriptures: wherefore the true Church we honour in respect of these things, but we doe not adore it and make it of
greater

greater Authority then the Scriptures themselves. Wherefore

3. We say, that the Authority of them doth not so much depend on the Church, as on their own innate light, and testimony of the Holy Spirit within us; their own innate light I say for saith *Chamier* there is in the Scriptures a *peculiaris genius* and *strein*, whereby they may upon examination be easily discovered to be the Word of God, as a *Critick* will know by the phrase and stile, and the like, that such a book is *Lyvies*, such an one *Juvenalls*, so also will a Christian upon the due search & triall of the holy Scriptures by their matter Heavenly, by their stile deep, and by their divine phrase mysticall, presently conclude that they are the Word of God, and that they can have no other Author then the King of Heaven: and then farther I say there is required a Testimony of the holy Spirit within us, which Spirit is as I may so speake the seale unto all the rest, and peculiar only to Gods Children, a man may
by

by the hearſay of the Church hiſtorically know the Scriptures, but this will no more comfort his heart then the diſcourſes concerning honey and ſweet-meates will the ſtomacke: a man may alſo be convicted of the truth of the Word from thoſe arguments I preſſed even now, and yet he may be no more converted by them then the *Jewes* were at the *Miracles* of Chriſt, which they knew were wrought by a divine power: well then what is it that muſt ultimately perſwade us and aſſure a child of God *certitudine fidei* with an aſſurance of faith that the Scriptures are the Word of God? the Church that cannot, for how can that infuſe faith, which the Scriptures every where ſet forth to be the Gift of God? what then is it that aſſures us? doubtleſſe the Spirit of God co-working with us, and upon our prayers and diligent reading and examining of the Word, aſſuring us that this Word which was thus confirmed by miracles, thus verified by the truth of
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the Propheſyes contained in it, this Word that hath ſo perfect a conſent within its ſelf, that hath ſo admirable efficacy upon the hearers and readers thereof, that hath been ſo wonderfully preſerved in all ages, that this Word, and this Word only, is the Word of God, and of divine authority; ſo then, the Church that can only report unto us, the Spirit that doth firmly perſwade us; the Church that can miniſterially only ingenerate an opinion in us, the Spirit a Faith and certainty of the Scriptures: as then men may heare a very great report of anothers worth, learning, and counſell, and yet be never fully ſatisfied concerning it, till they find it ſo to be by their own experience; or as thoſe *Samaritans* who did believe in part on Chriſt for the ſaying of the woman, were yet notwithstanding further confirmed & eſtabliſhed in the faith of him, when they heard his own words *John 4. 24.* in like manner though we may hiſtorically believe that the Scriptures are the Word of God

God because the Church saith so, yet this testimony of the Church doth minister little assurance or satisfaction unto a child of God, untill it be farther back't on and established by a farther testimony of the Spirit, which undoubtedly must be the firmest assurance a man can have, because it is *that alone which doth open the eyes to behold the wondrous things of the Law, Psal. 119. 18. 'tis that alone which leadeth into all truth, Joh. 16. 13. 'tis that alone which inseparably accompanys the faithfull in the Scriptures, My Spirit which is upon thee, and my words which I have put in thy mouth shall not depart out of thy mouth, Isa. 59. 21. and therefore 'tis that alone which gives strongest evidence unto its selfe speaking in the Scriptures, if yee receive the witnesse of men, the witnesse of God is greater saith S. Paul; the witnesse of the Church is but the witnesse of men, therefore the witnesse of the Spirit is greater: but say they, the Spirit speaketh by the Church, and therefore we must believe the Church*

Church only when it testifies of the Scriptures: *Whitaker* answers for me, that if so be the Spirit doth thus speak by the Church, from whence then hath the Church this assurance but from the Spirit, and so our beliefe of the Scriptures must ultimately resolve of necessity into the Testimony of the Spirit: againe they say, that the Church was before the Scriptures; we answer, no by no meanes, for then how can the Word be called *the everlasting wisdom of God, and the immortall seed*, of which the Church is borne: the Church was before the written Word but not before the unwritten. Aske a *Papist* how they know that the Church is of such authority, and they will prove it by the Scriptures, and therefore the authority proving, must needs be of greater esteem, and before the authority proved: but is not the Church called the pillar and ground of truth? yes, but what doth a candle receive any light from the candlestick, because it stickes in it? what though the Church is the seat

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and mansion place of the Scriptures, yet were it possible that there were no Church in the World, yet is not the Scripture of lesse authority then now it is; the Church then is only a *ministeriall* pillar to preserve, keep, and set forth the word, *not a fundamentall* one to uphold and give being unto it : and here I might wade farther into a Discourse concerning the authority of the Church and the Scriptures , but it having been so fully handled already and answered by multitudes of eminent men, I shall goe no farther: it remaines that I should practically apply what hath been already spoken , but this, together with the other propertyes of Scriptures, their perspicuity and perfection, I shall leave to the next part.



This is the *AUTHORS* last
Sermon that ever He preacht,
which was at S. *Maries* in
Oxon. March 20. 1655.

Phil. c. 3. v. 8. first part.

*Yea doubtlesse and I count
all things but losse, for
the excellency of the
Knowledge of Christ
Jesus my Lord.*



IN this Chapter the A-
postle armes his *Philip-
pians* against their false
teachers, by opposing
his own judgement and
example to their erroneous and ly-

ing suggestions. There were a company of prophane persons started up in the Church of *Philippi*, whom *Paul* counts no better then doggs, evill workers, and of the *concision*, *verse 2.* who instead of circumcising their hearts, went about rather to cut and rend asunder the Church; these men now being left to be brought from their old fleshly confidences, the workes of the Law, did vaunt much of their outward priviledges, and would fain sink into *circumcision*, and other ceremoniall performances, and joyne them with Christ, teaching that these were necessary to Justification, as well as faith in him. The Apostle therefore in zeale to the truth, and the better to quell these false Doctors, deales with them at their own weapon; and because he must needs Glory, when they force him to it, he falls upon them with his own priviledges, and shewes wherein he may boast as well, nay more then the best of them; *if any man thinketh he hath whereof he may trust in the flesh,*

Imore, v. 4, 5, 6 but well, (saith he) doe you think that either you or I are the better for these things, or a jot the nearer Heaven? certainly in no wise, and therefore I would have you *Philippians* (to whom I write) take notice for your own example, that I am of a contrary judgement to these seducers; for *what things were gaine to me &c.* 'tis true indeed saith Saint Paul before my conversion, I verily thought circumcision, outward privileges, and my own legall righteousness a great gain and vantage to me; I sooth'd my selfe up (vain Pharisee as I was) and thought Heaven was my due and right; but when once the knowledge of Christ dawn'd in upon me, those things which in my judgement were *κέρδιον* gain, profitable to me (that is) and meritorious in order to my Salvation, I presently thought to be *ζημια*, things that I were like to loose by, should I trust in them, rather hinderers then promoters of my Salvation; yea doubtlesse and at this present time

time, now that I am a grown Christian, rooted and settled in the knowledge of Christ; yet I count my present good workes and righteousnesses *yea τα πάντα Quæcunq; in mundo sunt* (saith Ambrose) all my learning and parts, every thing besides, but losse, pernicious, raw, empty things for the excellency of the knowlege of Christ Jesus my Lord. The more I know Christ, the lesse still of good I know by my selfe, after all things I finde it best to relye upon his imputed righteousness; so that the words of my text are a confirmation, or if you will, a farther amplification of what he said in the preceding verse: *ἀλλὰ μωρὸν γε* yea doubtlesse in good truth, what I said (verse 7.) was true at my first conversion, is much more true now, viz. that I count all things as losse for the excellency of the knowledg of Christ Jesus my Lord: So that here Paul passeth his vote for the knowledge of Christ, against all things besides; in this there is *τὸ ὑπερέχον* excellency admirable vertue; in those nothing but *ζημία καὶ οὐβλάβη*

σκύβαλα losse and dogges meat, fit only for such dogges as false teachers to seduce and delight in : the words in themselves and in their relation to the former, will afford many observations.

1. *Obs.* That no outward privileges are of any profit to Salvation : *Paul*, circumcised the eighth day, of the stock of Israel, of the tribe of *Benjamin*, a Hebrew of the Hebrewes, when he comes to know Christ counts all these but *losse*.

2. Noe righteousness of our own either before or after conversion can justifie us before God. Those outward good workes, by which *Paul* thought in his Pharisaicall condition to have gained Heaven by, before his conversion, *he counts losse* ; yea doubtlesse and all things besides, he means his goodnesse also after conversion, this he counts no better for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ *Jesus*.

3. That there is an extraordinary excellency in the knowledge of Christ above all things besides ; or if you

please, that the knowledge of Christ is the most excellent knowledge that is. I might prosecute all these, but I shall pitch only on the latter, as being most suitable to the place and company I speake to. In prosecution of the point, I shall shew unto you *first*, what is meant by the knowledge of Christ. *Secondly*, I shall shew unto you what qualifications there be in this knowledge, that may denominate it so excellent. *Thirdly*, I shall more particularly shew unto you, whence it is that this knowledge is so excellent. *Fourthly*, apply the point.

1. What is meant by the knowledge of Christ Jesus our Lord: there is a twofold knowledge of things; first, a bare Historicall and speculative, the second a practicall experimentall knowledge; The first is only a superficial view, and glance of the understanding upon the truth and being of things; thus the Devils do believe, & thus even *reprobates* may know Christ; As a man may know a country in a Map or table, which yet he is never

never like to see; so may the most debauch't wicked wretch in the world have some scantling book-knowledge of Christ, and yet never enjoy him in Heaven hereafter; he may be able to draw a scholastick Metaphysicall scheme of Christ his natures, his offices, his states of humility, exaltation, and the like; he may be able to discourse profoundly of his Incarnation, the Hypostaticall union, and whole mystery of our redemption, and yet with all his learning sinke deeper into Hell: though his braine may be full of notionall truths, yet his heart may be empty of any comfortable experiences of his Lord and Saviour, He cannot with *Thomas* say, *my Lord and my God*; but as the *Greeks*, that came up to worship at the feast *Joh. 12.* would faine see Jesus, yet more out of curiosity, then desire to be instructed by him; so doe such seek after and study Christ more in order to the satisfaction of their understandings, then conversion of their soules. But

2. There is a practicall experientiall knowledge, where the truths that we know have a strong impression upon our soules, so as to worke and transforme them into the same image with the thing known; when we do not rest in the bare contemplation of the thing, but perfectly love and are ravish't with the excellencies of it: and this is that knowledge of Christ that *Paul* prefers in the text, he counts all things as losse and dung in comparison of it, the more he knew Christ, the lesse he regarded other things; the more he was taken with him, the more willing was he to be ruled by him as his Lord, to obey his precepts, to be answerable to him in all things; now this practicall knowledge of Christ includes therefore these three things as I suppose in it.

First, Assent to his Doctrine, Word, and Promises. Every science before it is perfectly gotten supposeth an assent to some undemonstrable principles, which are foundations of it; thus,
for

for one instance ; before the understanding can build farther in the *Mathematicks* it presumes this as a ground that *Totum est majus sua parte* : so that even in these things faith seemes to be *principium intellectus* , as *Cusanus* speakes , the prime engine that sets the understanding a worke in the pursuit of knowledge ; and therefore we can never come to a distinct saving knowledge of Christ, unlesse we first believe in his Word and Doctrine ; A Turke may know Christ so farre as by hear-say and History , yet he cannot be said savingly to know him, because he denies his assent unto the Gospell , which is the ordinary way of discovering him to a man ; As when those that pretend to be disciples of any great *Philosopher* or Schollar doe wholly submit themselves to his *dogmata*, writings, and opinions ; as for example, the *Peripateticks* to *Aristotle* ; the *Scotists* to *Scotus* ; the *Thomists* to *Thomas* his Doctrine ; insomuch that they doe even sweare to resigne up their judgements

ments to the words of their Master, why so? much more ought Christians to give their assent unto the Word of their Lord & master Christ; therefore *John 10.* 'tis said, *that his Sheepe heare his voice and follow him; they presently adhere to his word, and accordingly obey him in it, He that heareth my Word, and believeth on him that sent me, hath everlasting Life, Joh. 5. 24.* we must first hearken to his Word before we can believe on him, and have everlasting life.

Secondly, it implyes affection to Christ. For as Gods knowing his people implyes his love towards them in Scripture, *the Lord knows the way of the Righteous, Psal. 1. v. 6.* so his peoples knowing of God implyes also affection towards him; hence Christ saith *that he knows his sheep, and is known of them, John 10. 14.* which implyes on both sides a mutuall love to each other: for so expressly *v. 15.* he saith *he will lay down his life for his sheep.* Hence ignorance is every where in holy writ made the ground of mens hatred

hatred and disaffection to Christ, and
 his people ; *had they known it, they would
 not have crucified the Lord of Glory, 1 Cor.*
2. 8. and John 15. 21. and c. 16. v. 3.
All these things (meaning persecutions)
 saith Christ, *they will doe unto you, because*
they have not known the Father nor me :
 did a man thoroughly and savingly
 know Christ he would be more in
 love with him ; for there is such an
 intimacy and union between the
 truth and goodnesse of divine ob-
 jects, that whosoever rightly under-
 stands the one will presently imbrace
 the other ; so that be sure, that is but
 a vaine empty knowledge of Christ,
 where the characters of it are not im-
 printed in our hearts and affections ;
 even in common discourse , when we
 say I know such a one is of excellent
 parts, of a sweet and good disposi-
 tion ; this implies our secret esteem
 and respect unto the person ; and
 how can we be said truely to know
 him as *the fairest of ten-thousand,*
 as our Saviour, Reconciler, Lord and
 God ? unlesse our hearts be carried
 forth

forth in a high esteem and love of him: 'tis said *Jam. 2.19. The Divells do believe and therefore tremble*; certainly did they know there was any mercy in store for them (as now there is nothing but vengeance) as they now tremble and feare, so they would then love and admire Christ; and did we but justly understand the admirable goodnesse and excellencies of Christ, we should be more taken with him, we should keep his commandments with more observance, and feare more to displease him then we doe. O let us never say we know Christ, that we have intimacy and acquaintance with him, when our hearts are farre from him; when we have an *Idea* of him in our Braine, and not so much as a lust Crucified by the Knowledge of his death, not ~~one~~ grace the more implanted by the knowledge of his Resurrection; when we pretend to know him, yet grieve his Spirit, wound his glory, trample under foot his blood, disobey his precepts, and preferre a *Barrabas*, a robber,

a sinne that dispoiles him of his Glory before the Lord of life ; believe it, this knowledge of Christ is *scientia affectiva* ; it must sinke deeper then to into our affections, and transforme the whole man into the image of Christ, otherwise it is but a counterfeite, not a reall knowledge of him.

Thirdly, this practicall knowledg of Christ implies a particular application of him to our own soules ; what good will it doe me to know there is gold in the *Indies*, unlesse I had it in my coffer, or to know when I am hungry that there is in such a place hony and food , unlesse I did tast it my selfe ? no more good will the knowledge of Christ doe us, unlesse we doe eate him and drinke him by faith , and can say with *Paul* in the text, *I know him to be my Lord that hath redeemed me and will save me* : you will not count him a good *Physitian* that knoweth only the name, figure, and shape of an hearb in *Gerhard* or *Mathiolum*, and not the use and application of the same, and so neither can ye
call

call him a knowing Christian that can discourse only of Christ in generall, being in the meane while ignorant of the benefits and the comfortable application of them: he may still for all this lay under the curse, under the pangs of conscience, the sence of the wrath of God, the tyranny of sin and Sathan, unlesse he can feele Christs spirit, as *Thomas* did corporally, and say, *My Lord and My God*, *Joh. 20. 28.* in all true knowledge the Acts of the understanding are reflexive, the soule will start back and rebound upon its selfe, it will first goe out unto Christ its direct object, and then turne in upon its selfe, and examine its own interest in him. Hence saith Saint *Paul* in the 2 *Cor. 13. v. 5.* *Examine your selves whether you be in the Faith*, let your soules retire into themselves, and there diligently examine the matter, and you will quickly find whether you believe in Christ or have any communion with him, which cannot be rightly known unlesse you so examine your selves, and

so much shall suffice to be spoken of the first point.

The second is the *qualifications* of this knowledge.

1. 'Tis a revealed supernaturall knowledge. *Flesh and blood hath not revealed it unto thee, saith Christ of himselfe to Simon Peter, but my Father which is in Heaven, Mat. 16. v. 17.* neither carnall reason nor humane wisdom can ever suggest Christ unto us: 'tis God alone that reveales his Sonne in us, *Gal. 1. v. 16.* Nature can rise no higher then things within its own bounds and spheare: As water cannot runne above its own fountaine: now the knowledg of Christ doth much exceed the reach of naturall disquisition, 'tis the wisdom of God in a mystery, hidden wisdom, which none of the princes of this world knew, *1 Cor. 2.* we attaine usually unto naturall knowledg by much industry & turmoile of body & minde, when our understanding doth out of some imperfect hint, and blushes of the causes of things, by degrees hack and hew out the truth of them, and by

P much

much labour and toyle we get and
 serve out of nature the small know-
 ledge that we have; whereas now all
 the toyle and study in the world
 will never advance a meer naturall
 man to the knowledge of Christ, be-
 cause I suppose he hath not so much
 as ~~a~~ hint from nature to set him a
 worke in the pursuit of it : that there
 should be three persons in the Essence,
 that the second of these persons, God
 the Sonne, should be made man, and
 be degraded to the forme of a ser-
 vant, be borne of a virgin, dye, and in
 death get a victory over death, and the
 like, are such riddles to a naturall
 man, that he cannot possibly receive
 them, as the Apostle expresseth it
 1 Cor. 2. 15. neither can he in his most
 extravagant and roving apprehensi-
 ons fasten or light upon them : which
 makes me thinke that *Trismegistus* and
Plato had been peeping into the books
 of *Moses*, when they speak so emphati-
 cally of the $\delta\lambda\omicron\gamma\theta$, yea and the
 Spirit of God, as they are quoted by
Lud. Vives & *Morney* in their bookes de
 veritate

veritate Religionis, so that the meer historicall knowledge of Christ doth originally arise from revelation, how much more then doth the true saving knowledge of him descend immediately from the Spirit of God, enlightning our understandings to see him, opening our hearts to embrace him, and guiding us into all truth, 'tis not our poring upon a body of Divinity, our running over the Schoolemen, and spending our oyle and labour in the bare speculation of these truths, that bring us to a saving knowledge of Christ; but we must be all taught of God, and waite upon the blessed influences of his Spirit with an humble soule, with prayers and teares, and fasting and weeping and mourning for our ignorance, that God would come from above into us and instruct us in the excellent knowledge of him, who indeed to them that perish is foolishnesse, but to them that are called the wisdom of God, and the power of God.

2 This is the alone saving know-
 F 2 ledge

ledge, that is, *this is life eternall* that they might know thee the only true God and *Jesus Christ* whom thou hast sent, *Ioh. 17. 3.* There is no other name given under Heaven by whom we can be saved ; and he is the way, the truth, and the life, and the door by whom alone we have entrance into Heaven, how can we enter into life, but by the way, by the doore ? how can we see the Father but by the Sonne, who reveales him ? So that to assigne Salvation to such as never so much as dream't of Christ, is a presumption not justifiable by Scripture or reason: I cannot conceive how the dimme snuffe of naturall light should be sufficient to guide a man to Heaven. 'Tis only that light of the world, as the Evangelist saith, that *ἡ λυγὴ τῆς ψυχῆς*, that Sonne of the soule (as the Father stiles him) that shewes us the way to eternall happinesse, since without faith in him 'tis impossible to please God, and all the best righteousnesses of naturall men are but menstruous raggs, splendid abominations ; A corrupt tree cannot bring forth good fruit,

fruit, neither doe we gather grapes of thornes; we may in charity hope, we cannot out of the Scripture conclude, that any are saved without the knowledge of Christ: neither the *Jewes* simply by their Law, nor the *Gentiles* by their *Phylosophy* could ever reach Heaven. Though *Clemens Alexandrinus*, and many of the Schoolmen, & *Zuinglius* seem to teach the contrary, perhaps more out of charity to see many poore soules, that otherwise they thought must inevitably perish, then any solid grounds they had from Scripture for it: and seriously who could without trembling think of the sad condition of those poor wretches that the revealed Word of God concludes them under, were it not for this, that God ha's unsearcheable wayes to save those that we most despair of, that the infinite mercifull creator can by meanes altogether unknown to us, display his Sonne even to those that sit in darkenesse, and the regions of death. But to hasten.

3. This knowledge of Christ is a

P 3

pleasant

pleasant knowledge : All knowledge (as the *Phylosopher* notes) carries a secret content and pleasure along with it, and therefore *videre & speculari querimus ut gaudeamus* ; As delightfull colours are unto the eye, so is truth unto the understanding, a comfortable refreshing thing; now the knowledge of Christ must be pleasant in its very first dawning to a benighted soule, for the entrance of it giveth light and understanding to the simple. Ps 119.v.130. must not the approach of light be needs be pleasant to those under the poles after halfe a years darknesse, or unto such as are borne blind , or have been kept in a dungeon all their dayes before ; and can the Sun of Righteousnesse think ye be otherwise when he riseth in a poore soule, that hath laid thirty, forty, perhaps fifty yeares together in blindnesse and ignorance ? O how comfortable a thing will it then be unto him to see himselfe translated out of darknesse into marvellous light, to find the eyes of his understanding opened,

the

the veile taken off, and his sinnes pardoned, which were as a thick cloud to hinder him from the sight of his Saviour, *all the wayes of wisdom are wayes of pleasantnesse and her paths peace,* Prov. 3. 17. What more pleasant then light? why *Christ is the true light:* Job. 1. what more delightfome to the tast then hony? *His statutes are sweeter then the hony or hony-combe,* Psal. 19. what more taketh us then ease and rest? *his very yoke is easie and his burden light,* Mat. 11. 'tis ignorance of Christ that makes his wayes seem unpleasant to us; for no man ever tooke any pleasure in that which he understands not; hence those inward loathings of his Word, those risings and heart-burnings against the simplicity of the Gospell in prophane persons; these are people of no understanding, they never knew what belonged to the inward comforts and refreshments of the Spirit; what delight there is in keeping Gods Law, what pleasure 'tis for a thirsty soule to drink of the water of life, for a

hungry soule to feed upon Manna and the bread that came down from Heaven? they know what comfort there is in the kisses of his mouth, in his love that is better then wine, in his abode and supping with you; and therefore no wonder that all their delight is to dowze themselves in carnall pleasures, to *eate and drinke and rise up to play*, that they are so averse from duties, so sad and heavy in spirituall performances, that they so much loath his Word, his people, his Embassadors, his gracious motions, and invitations, the truth of all is this, they know not Christ, and therefore they have no pleasure in him.

4. This knowledge is a satisfying knowledge: other knowledge is like some sauce, which when you receive into you, begets a fresh and new appetite; the knowledge of the one thing doth set the teeth on edge, as here, and makes us thirst after more, whereas Christ is an object fitted and suited to the most vast and bound-
less

lesse desires of the soule, and therefore
 what the *Phylosopher* said of naturall
 knowledge, we may more properly
 say of divine, that 'tis *ἡσυχία τῆς ψυχῆς*
 a rest and repose of the soule; whereas
 naturall bodies in their proper places,
 so the soule of man rests contented
 and satisfied in Christ, in whom are hid
 all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge,
Col. 2. v. 3. There is enough in him to
 fill the soul up to the brim, and to
 answer all the impatient roivings and
 agitations of our Spirits after know-
 ledge; in him dwelleth all fullnesse,
 fulnesse of Grace to sanctify us, full-
 nesse of righteousness to justify us,
 fullnesse of Glory to crown us: no na-
 turall object can satisfy the soule, be-
 cause the desires thereof being bound-
 lesse, & infinite, it presently digests &
 swallowes up all finite things, but
 now Christ both in his nature and
 Graces is so commensurate and pro-
 portionable an object for the soule,
 that it may eternally feed upon him
 to full content and satisfaction; His
 mercies infinite, his love infinite, his
 Graces

Graces are inexhaustible, for God hath not given the Spirit by measure, and his gifts and graces are compared by the Prophet to a feast of marrow and fat things, *Is. 25. v. 6.* because as these do satisfie the sensuall, so those the intellectuall appetite, it satisfieth the longing soule and filleth the hungry soule with goodnessse, *Psal. 107. v. 9.* wherefore then saith the Prophet *Esay 55. v. 2.* doe yee spend money for that which is not bread, and your labour for that which satisfieth not, *Hearken diligently unto me, and eat ye that which is good, and let their soule delight it selfe in fainesse.*

Lastly, This is an ever-increasing rising knowledge, there is a growth in it *2 Pet. 3. 18.* we go from one degree of it to another 'till we become perfect men; in our first conversion we are but children and babes in Christ, of little understanding and knowledge, 'till by prayer, temptations, experiences, often supplies and returns of grace, we become strong in faith, nothing doubting, and encrease in wisdom and all spirituall understanding

standing, Christ doth not discover himselfe all at once to the Soule but πολυμερῶς and πολυτροπῶς peicemeale Heb. i. i. and in diverse manners, here a little, and there a little. As in naturall science) the minde doth not usually graspe & comprehend the whole circumference of a thing together, but insensibly by degrees creeps upon truth, takes and (as I may so speake) steales off that veile that hides the nature of it from us; thus Christ by degrees irradiates and shines upon the soule, and so we may be the more sensible of our former ignorance, and more thankfull for our present illumination: he never so clearly presents himselfe to any, but that the knowledge is still improveable, and may receive farther increase; for at the best in this world we doe view but in a glasse darkely, we are faine to borrow the spectacles of his Word, his ordinances, and his Sacraments to looke on him, our lusts and corruptions as so many evill vapours hinder us from a full prospect of him, yet generally

nerally we see him clearer and clearer, as these ragges of flesh weare and rot from off us, 'till at length when the soule is got lose of this prison of clay, it knowes him immediately without the helpe of a glasse, *now we know him but in part, but we shall know him even as also we are known,* 1 Cor. 13. 12.

The third point is to discover unto you more particularly wherein the excellency of this knowledge consists, and tis I suppose 1. In the object and things known. 2. In the influences it hath upon the party knowing.

1. The things known by this knowledge of Christ are most excellent: the nobler the object, the nobler the science; now in what noble sublime matter this knowledge deales, is plaine; whether we consider the personall excellences of Christ, the graces and perfections of his nature, the glory, beauty, and comelinesse of his person, which must needs ravish, and take up our thoughts; though to fasten here and
goe

goe no farther is but to admire the glittering of the shew, not considering the pearles within, & to pore upon a picture, not regarding the living party it represents. Faith as the *Spouse* in the *Canticles* seems to be pleased even with the outward draught and comlineffe of a Saviour, to see him in glory sitting at Gods right hand, but then it eyes him chiefly as a crucified Saviour; as therefore *Paul* desires to know nothing but *Christ and Him Crucified*, as the only and chiefe concernment to him; or whether the Promises of *Christ*, those breasts of consolation at which this knowledge lyes still sucking and delighting it selfe in, they are excellent things, precious Promises, in which the soule can find more comfort then in all the earthly joyes & pleasures of this world; or lastly, whether we consider the mysterys it containes, they are admirable mysteryes, and without controversy (saith the Apostle *1 Tim. 3. v. 16.*) *Great is the mysterie of Godlinesse, God was manifest in the flesh, justified*

justified of the Spirit, seen of Angels, preached unto the Gentiles, believed on in the world, received up into Glory; Every trade and profession we say hath a mystery in it, something (that is) which is not known to every one: sure I am, that a Christians profession is altogether taken up in a mystery, such a myserie that had the Angels themselves (pardon the expression) been bound prentice to understand it, they had without Gods speciall revelation remain'd altogether ignorant of it; for the 1 of Pet. 1. 12. 'tis said the Angels themselves do desire to looke into it: even now that this great mystery of our Redemption is made manifest unto the world, see'tis so full of admirable inscrutable excellencys, that the Angels themselves desire yet to be Pupils unto it; and are curious to learne more continually of it.

2. The excellency of this knowledge may be discovered in the effects and influences of it; which are *first*, to discover God more clearly unto us: *secondly*, to discover our selves unto our selves.

1. It discovers God more cleerly unto us, for *Christ is the brightnesse of his Glory, and the expresse image of his person, Heb. 1. 3.* So that looke as we know the Sunne by its light, and a naturall father usually by his Sonne, who carryes his substantiall image, so is God seen in Christ, and therefore the Apostle *Col. 1. v. 15.* saith, *he is the Image of the invisible God.* God himselfe he lives in inaccessible light, no man can see him and live, but it hath pleased him to manifest himselfe in Christ, in whom dwells the Godhead bodily, whatsoever glory, whatsoever wisdom, whatsoever power is in God, is plainly drawn forth and exprest in Christ; he is the essentiall substantiall copy (if I may so speake with reverence) of his Father, in whom alone he is most legibly and clearly to be read; the creatures indeed doe in their kind represent God, but then a very broken and imperfect copy they are of him, so that the *Gentiles* by falsely spelling and putting together their letters read God in a monstrous prodigious manner

manner and become vaine in their imaginations, and their foolish hearts were darkened, Rom. 1. As men that read in an old moth-eaten broken manuscript may easily mistake the originall meaning; so methinks the Gentiles having nothing to study God in, but the dull and darke print of the Creatures, presently fell into grosse mistakes and multitudes of errors concerning him, for they changed the glory of the incorruptible God into an image made like unto corruptible man, and to birds, and four-footed beasts and creeping things, Rom. 1. v. 23. but now Christ is so cleer a representation of his Father, that if we know him aright, we cannot mistake God at all, He and his Father are one, so that you may comprehend and know him as it were, for he that seeth him seeth the Father, and he that cometh to him, cometh to the Father, as in St John 'tis every where exprest.

2. This knowledge of Christ discovers our selves also unto our selves: the knowledge of our selves is one of the best and most divine know-

knowledge that is: *E cælo descendit* the heathen could say, now we cannot know Christ aright, but we must know our selves also, know in what a miserable and wretched estate we are without him, how vile and loathsome we are in our own natures, how base and worthlesse our best performances, how ugly and deformed our persons, and our services are in the eyes of God. As when the beames of the Sunne come into a roome they discover all the dust and filthinesse in the roome, so when Christ beames in upon the soule, the filthinesse and corruption of our hearts and lives doe straight way appeare, we then see what a horrid thing sinne is, that put so blessed a Saviour to so cruell a death: we see what a cursed slavery we are all in by nature, to the law, to sinne, to Satan, till the Son doth make us free: before we know Christ, the Divell doth cast a mist before our eyes, & so hood-winks our soules that we cannot see where we are, what we are, or whither we are going; till

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he takes the veile from off our eyes, and then by our present light we know what it was to be in darkenesse: Through Grace we know what sinne is, how to debase our selves and advance Christ.

Use.

First, Is it so, that the knowledge of Christ is the most excellent knowledge; *more to be desired then gold, yea then most fine gold, more pretious then Rubies*; is it the glory of a Christian to be more perfect in this, to teach this, to learne this? then it should reprove all those who make not this the main end & scope of their studies and endeavours. As

1. Such carnall dispensers of the *Word*, that use rather to speak in *enticing words of mans wisdom*, then in demonstration of the Spirit and power; and that dresse their discourses in the *Apish & foolish conceptions of mans wit*; neglecting in the meane while the *sacred Word*, which alone is able to make both themselves and their Auditors wise unto Salvation; such in the language of S. Paul doe make the
Grosse

Crosse of Christ of none effect, 1 Cor. 1. 17.
 whilst they labour to possesse men
 with the love of their affected streines
 more then with the naked and simple
 truth of the Gospell: and therefore
 the good Apostle professeth, that he
 did determine to know nothing a-
 mongst the *Corinthians*, save *Jesus*
Christ and him crucified: He could have
 flaunted as well as the best of those se-
 ducers, and have trimmed his speeches
 with as much elegancy as any, but
 saith he, away with such trash to the
 herd of mankind, that had rather
 feed upon such husks then the bread
 of life; let others vaunt as they please,
 and you expect what you will from
 me, yet this is my resolution not to
 know any thing saving *Jesus Christ*: and
 therefore exceedingly to be blamed
 are all they, that contrary to his
 Word preach to the eare and not un-
 to the heart; & seek rather to gratify
 the sensuall corrupt affections of men,
 then to implant in them the saving
 knowledge of Christ. O beloved!
 we are to deale with the soules of

men ; to rescue them from Hell, and to pluck them out of the paws of the Divell, by whom they are led captive. We meet againe too too often with poor ignorant wretches to instruct, who scarce know whether there be any Christ, any Holy Ghost; moreover we are not to deale with flesh and blood, but with principalities and powers; the lusts of men they are to be blasted and beaten down by us; the consciences of men to be wrought upon and satisfied, sins to be convicted the *righteousnesse of Christ* to be pressed; *the Crosse of Christ which is foolishnesse to the world to be preached*; this is our labour, this our worke, & what need we then to daube with untempered mortar, and to mixe humane inventions with sacred truths : why is that zealous thirst after applause, and to set up our selves more then our Saviour? why is it then men desire oftentimes more to display their own reading then the knowledge of Christ and him crucified? not as if there were no use of humane learning in the mystery of the

the Word, *Paul* himfelfe made ufe of
a Poet to convince the *Athenians*, *Act.*

17. nor doe we fpeake this to counte-
nance thofe that doe the worke of the
Lord negligently, and bring the lame,
fapleffe, undigefed notions, to this
facrifice: doubtleffe God that requires
the whole man, requires the braine as
well as the heart in this fervice, and
he gives us talents not to lay up in
a napkin, but to bring themforth as
occafion fhall require for his Glory
and the Churches good; we all know
by fad experience, into what diforders
and inconveniences, the contempt of
fecular learning hath brought many
giddy foules of this Nation, and how
proftituted and difregarded the care-
leffe management, and wanton itch of
preaching hath made the office of the
miniftry. O that God would be plea-
fed to convince all of us, efpecially
the forward youth of this Univerfity,
of the tremendous burthen that lyes
upon the fhoulders of a Minifter, *Opus*
Angelis formidandum, but to return: I fay
we do not hereby difcountenance lear-

ning, or learned and painfull preaching, especially in due place and time, but only we ought to take heed, that *Hagar* doe not juttle out *Sarah*; that the handmaid, *secular learning* doe not take place in our affections above the free woman, the knowledge of *Christ*; that our Sermons favour not more of learning, then of grace, and that our designe be not to get more admirers of our parts, then Disciples of *Christ*.

2. This would reprove all those in generall, that are more in love with humane knowledge, then that the knowledge of *Christ*, are more taken with an *Aristotle*, a *Plato*, perhaps a *Romance*, or play-booke, then a *Prophet* or an *Apostle*; suffering in the mean while poor illiterate men to rise up and carry away Heaven from them, whilst they with all their learning sinke down into Hell; I wish there were not too many in the world more intimate with nature then with Grace; and less Christians then Schollars; but let me
ask

aske these great Masters of *Israel* why
 the mysteries of the Gospell, and the
 knowledge of Christ should be so
 much slighted by them? is it because
 'tis foolishnesse unto them, why let
 them know, that the foolishnesse of God
 is wiser then men; and all the empty ci-
 sternes of worldly wisedome, are no-
 thing comparable to those treasures
 of wisedome and knowledge, that are
 hid in Christ: or is it because there is
 more reputation that attends worldly
 knowledg? why alas! *what credit is it to*
be accounted wise amongst a company of fooles?
 and such the Scriptures every where
 terme the world and carnall men;
 the World indeed vilifies and hates
 Christ, because it knowes him not, but
 then Christ professeth he will not
 know them at the last day, and O
 then *what will become of the wise, the*
Scribe, the disputer of this world? will it
 not then appeare that the wisedome
 of this world was foolishnesse; and
 that they bought the esteeme of lear-
 ning at a deere rate, when they
 shall see indeed, that *not many wise*
 men

men after the flesh are saved; or lastly, is it because they find more content in worldly wisdom? why let the wise man speake what content there can be therein *Eccles. 1. 18. in much wisdom there is much griefe, and he that increaseth knowledge, increaseth sorrow*: how much toile and vexation in getting it, how much care for feare of loosing it, yea how little comfort in the enjoyment of it? so many lusts still interposing and clouding their severest meditations, so much thoughtfulnessse to uphold their esteem in the world, so much envy at others eminency, so much distraction by occasion of new doubts and difficulties &c. whereas now the true saving knowledge of Christ brings a serenity and composednesse of mind with it, purgeth and refineth the soule from those darke mists of corruption, sanctifies and sweetens all other learning, and exerciseth all other parts which are but losse and dung without it; and why then should this so excellent knowledge be thought so con-

contemptible amongst many? why should they as so many wild *Indians* preferre glasse, beades, and toyes before precious stones? or like that Schoolemaster fancied by *Rob. Gallus* gnaw upon flintes and pebbles amidst sweet-meates and most delicate fare? why should men be so greedy after the jejune and empty knowledge of the creatures, and yet so remisse in the pursuit of Heavenly wisdom? O that we could all understand that the feare of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom, and the greatest glory of our wisdom to be wise unto Salvation.

3. Therefore this should exhort us all to study Jesus Christ; and to labour after the knowledge of him, whom only to know is eternall life; all knowledge is in it selfe desirable; it being the best glosse and varnish that sets forth an intellectuall being; and hence saith *Lactantius*, God hath lim'd and armed mans inside with reason that he might distinguish him from all the creatures of lower formes; so that he seems lesser then a man, that

that is not taken even with naturall truth & wisdom; and certainly he is lesse then a Christian, that desires not Heavenly and Spirituall wisdom: 'tis naturall for all things to desire their perfection; now then as the knowledge of naturall things is the perfection of a man, so the knowledge of Christ is the perfection of a Christian, and therefore Solomon bids us seeke after it more then choyce gold, *Prov. 8. v. 10.* we all desire wisdom, why in him are hid all the treasures of wisdom, and therefore enough to fill up all the vast and boundlesse desires of our immortall soules; 'tis only fooles that despise wisdom, *Prov. 1.* as therefore you desire not to be branded with the name of fooles, go unto Christ, who is the wisdom of God, the author of every good and perfect gift, and if any of you lack this wisdom let him aske of God, that giveth unto all men liberally, and upbraiderh not; and it shall be given him, *Jam. 1. v. 5.*

So that the 1. direction for the attaining of this knowledge of Christ
may

may be the prayer of faith, *let him aske in faith nothing wavering*, pray unto God that he would shew thee thy naturall blindnesse, ignorance, and stupidity; what a foole thou art by nature; how destitute of any saving knowledge; and that then he would send his Spirit into thy inward parts, to enlighten thy mind and to bring thee out of darknesse into marvellous light; pray unto him that Christ may be made unto thee wisdom, that thou mayst know him here in his Person, in his Offices, in his benefits, know him in the pardon of thy sinnes, in the subduing of thy corruptions; as thy King that will save thee, thy Priest that hath redeemed thee, thy Prophet that doth instruct thee.

2. Labour to see the inconveniences and miseries that will follow upon thy not knowing of Christ; indeed we can know nothing besides him that can minister any comfort unto us; in Heaven above what is to be known there? but an angry sinne

re-

revenging God, an implacable judge, whom no man hath seen, nor ever shall see in the way of mercy, unlesse the Sonne reveale him unto him: in the earth, what objects can we fixe upon that are not our mortall enemies without Christ? all the Creatures they are ready to snap at us, and revenge the quarell of God against sinne upon us: in Hell what can we know but that 'tis our place, that 'tis prepared alone for those that know not God? for so saith the *Apostle*, that Christ at the last day shall be revealed from Heaven, with his mighty Angells, in flaming fire to take vengeance on those that know not God, 2 *Theß.* 1. 8. againe, labour to see what inconveniences the want of the saving knowledge of Christ will bring us unto; a man that walkes in the darke will be ever apt to stumble and fall, and so 'tis here, he that is without any Spirituall light within, must needs walke in much danger; thus the *Gospell* was to the *Jewes* a stumbling block, because they were ignorant of its excellencies; and thus the
or

ordinances of Christ are stumbling blockes to them that know him not, they hate them, the people of Christ are despised, *they having no knowledge eate them up as they would eate bread, Psal. 14. 4.* did men but throughly know Christ, they would be more in love with his ordinances, with his people, with his Ministers, with Salvation, with their own soules: labour then to see these inconveniences of spirituall ignorance, be ashamed of thy selfe, and lay about thee with all thy might for to gaine more knowledge. To this end,

3. Study Christs bookes, the Holy Scripture, and thou shalt by the grace of God come to a knowledge of him: these alone are able to make thee *perfect and wise unto Salvation*; they are those wells out of which we may draw plenty of the waters of Salvation; those precious mines out of which we may digge treasures of wisdom; let us search them therefore not with a search of curiosity, to discourse and talke of them, but
with

with a search of humility to amend our lives by them, and to furnish our selves with the excellency of the knowledge of Christ; other bookes can only unfold nature unto thee, and that but imperfectly too: this reveales *mysteries that Angells themselves did desire to peepe into*: so that there is more reall worth comprised in one versicle of them, then there is in all the voluminous Offsprings and workes of mans braine; as the very shavings and filings of gold and precious stones are of more value then whole heaps of dirt and pebbles.

To conclude therefore, since we have so excellent a knowledg before us, *more to be desired then Gold, yea then much fine gold, more precious then Rubies*, since we have such plentifull mines before us, as the Scriptures, out of which we may dig these treasures, what remains but that we still labour to grow in grace and in the knowledg of our Lord and Saviour *Jesus Christ*, and continually to study him on earth, whom we all hope to enjoy in Heaven: as travellers will
learne

learne the manners and customes of
 the people and country they are to go
 unto ; so let us study Heaven and
 Christ in his Word , that so we may
 comfortably possesse him at the end
 of our pilgrimage in Heaven hereaf-
 ter. We know not how soone Christ
 may summon us before him, and that
 day come, *when our selves and all our*
naturall knowledge must be wrapt up in the
same sheet together ; the shortnesse and
 uncertainty of our dayes bespeakes
 our double diligence, and no longer
 to play the truants in the Schoole of
 Christ , but to redeem the time we
 have lost , and to improve the few
 dayes we have before us towards the
 advancement of this knowledge : let
 us study Christ, let us preach Christ,
 let us live to Christ, that so these *seed*
plots of learning may not be account-
 ed the *seminaries of Atheisme* and
 heresy, as the Schooles of the *Philoso-*
phers were in primitive times, but the
 Seminaries of the knowledg of Christ:
 farre be it that in these our Christian
Athens there should be an *unknown*
 God

God , an *unknown Christ*; great are our meanes , our advantages , and opportunities in the attaining of this knowledge , and great therefore and sadde will be our accounts at the last day , if we neglect it: As therefore we tender the good of our soules , as ever we expect the fruition of Christ in glory , let it be our constant care to study him here , & to contemplate him in the glasses of his word and ordinances , till at length this our imperfect knowledge of him be swallowed up in vision , and a comfortable enjoyment of him , *with whom is fullnesse of joy and pleasures for evermore.*

F I N I S .
